

## 第4部 課題

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# 第18回 毎日パソコン入力コンクール 6月大会

【課題】

第4部 英文B

Free tuition plan should guarantee fairness,  
universities' independence

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(文字数3,600字程度)


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一般社団法人 日本パソコン能力検定委員会


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Editorial: Free tuition plan should guarantee fairness,  
universities' independence 

The administration of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has commenced  
laying concrete foundations for tuition-free higher education in  
Japan. As this system takes shape, however, the authorities  
should take care that it does not become a tool for government  
control of universities. 


Under the government's plan, people from households under the  
2.5-million-yen threshold for paying local taxes would be exempt  
from tuition at national universities and junior colleges. Those  
advancing to private institutions of higher education would  
receive a set amount of tuition support. The government would pay  
the tuition exemption or support amounts directly to the  
institutions concerned. 


It is very important to support young people from poor families  
to advance their education, as a way to break the chain of  
poverty in low-income families and prevent economic inequality  
from being baked permanently into Japanese society. 


There is, however, one aspect of the plan that gives us pause:  
The government is demanding that institutions meet certain  
conditions to receive the tuition aid payments. Namely, the  
government is calling on universities to hire teaching staff with  
real-world experience, tap outsiders as governing board members,  
strictly manage student grading, and disclose information on  
their financial statuses and management practices. This list of  
requirements will directly impact class content and overall

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education at these institutions. 

Indeed, it is important for universities to undertake reform to respond to the shifting needs of society. We also agree that the hiring of instructors with hands-on working experience in their fields would energize the educational content at these schools. 

Furthermore, some 40 percent of private universities across Japan are not meeting their student enrollment quota, and a weeding-out of weaker institutions and a general reshuffle of the sector are inevitable. Large sums of public money cannot be dumped into keeping schools with sloppy management and educational programs alive. 

However, educational reform needed at the institutions themselves is a different issue than economic support for students. And under the current proposals, there is a risk that tuition support will be used as a back door to impose the government's thinking about higher education on universities. 

Juichi Yamagiwa, president of both Kyoto University and the Japan Association of National Universities, has been increasingly critical of the setting of conditions for universities to receive tuition aid payments, calling it government "intervention in schools' autonomy." Universities should play a leading role in educational reform, so we can certainly understand his concerns. We also have concerns about applying conditions and requirements uniformly to all institutions. 

The government's tuition support conditions also take a student's high school grades into account. If the conditions are too severe, then the policy will risk losing its meaning as an anti-poverty measure. It would be much more appropriate to

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concentrate continuing eligibility evaluations on a recipient's performance after admission. ↩

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has set up an expert committee to consider the system, and the body is expected to present specific recommendations on issues including eligibility conditions for students and institutions by this summer. ↩

We hope to see a system that is both fair and extends a helping hand to as many students as possible.

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