

Results for Certified Evaluation and Accreditation for Junior College

Otani University Junior College



| Basic Information of the Institution | |
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| Ownership: Private | Location: Kyoto, Japan |
| Accreditation Status | |
| Year of the Review: 2015 | |
| Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April.01.2016– March.31.2023) | |

Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Results for the Otani University Junior College

Overview

The Otani University Junior College has its roots in a “dormitory for students” that Higashi Hongan-ji Temple established in 1665, which later became Otani University. In 1949, after the new Japanese higher education system was introduced and Otani University was incorporated into the new system. Its junior college, the Otani University Junior College (hereafter, the College), was founded in 1950. Since then, the College has established and reorganized its academic units and currently operates with two departments: the Department of Buddhist Studies, and the Department of Early Childhood and Nursery Education. With its two campuses, one located in Kyoto City, Kyoto Prefecture, and the other located in Otsu City, Shiga Prefecture, it has developed its research and educational activities based on its founding spirit.

After its accreditation review by Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) in 2008, the College has made the issue of enrollment management in the Department of Buddhist Studies the utmost priority and has made improvements in this area. At the Presidents’ Meeting in December 2014, the decision was made to reorganize the College and the entire Otani University, and a plan was established to undertake the reorganization effort after 2018.

The College has made several unique efforts. For example, the College has made sure to inform students of its founding mission through the use of a common textbook, “Learning at Otani University: Founding Spirit,” in the class “Buddhism and Human Being I.” The College has also introduced practice-based educational programs, including fieldwork performed in the Department of Buddhist Studies and practice-oriented learning in the Department of Early Childhood and Nursery Education. Through these programs, the College has strengthened students’ motivation to learn through various kinds of participatory and experiential classes and events. Moreover, in each department, the College has created a research office that supports students’ learning and life activities, where faculty members and administrative staff are always available to respond to students’ needs and every eventuality. In terms of internal quality assurance, the College has formulated objectives and action plans for each academic and administrative unit based on its Grand Design, and has conducted self-studies at the end of each academic year.

However, the College has some issues to address, including the content of its admission policies for each department and the way it projects the students that each department wishes to recruit (i.e., “the image of prospective students”). JUAA hopes that the College will make improvements on these issues.

Notable Strength

Educational Content, Methods, and Outcome

- It is commendable that the College has motivated students to learn through various kinds of participatory and experiential classes and events. For example, the College has had students conduct fieldwork in the Department of Buddhist Studies, including the “Shinran Walk” in which students visit places that are remembered in connection to Shinran, a founder of the Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, and the “Buddha Walk,” in which students visit the remains of Buddhist places in northern India. In the Department of Early Childhood and Nursery Education, students participate in many practice-based education events such as “Integrated Expression of Childcare Content” and “One-Day Camp Seminar of the Early Childhood Education Department.”

Suggestions for Improvements

Enrollment

- In regards to the admission policies, the Department of Buddhist Studies and the Department of Early Childhood and Nursery Education refer to the same “images of prospective students” and the same standards for knowledge and skills. This situation should be improved, with each department formulating its own policies, considering properly the relation between admission policies and policies on degree award and to curriculum design policies.
- In the Department of Buddhist Studies, the average of the ratios of the last five years of enrolled freshmen to the freshman admission cap is low at 0.53, and the ratio of enrolled students to the student enrollment cap is also low at 0.68. This should be improved.

Administration and Finance

- As the financial situation of the College has had unfavorable on the entire Otani University, the College should improve its balance management of settled accounts in a fiscal year by bringing the imputed income and expenditure balance into a surplus.