

## Greetings from the President's Office

2014.8.8 NO.5

### Message from the Vice President

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that Professor Mark Williams has decided to step down as the Vice President of Akita International University on August 31, 2014, after 3 years in the position. Dr. Williams has played an important role in promoting globalization on campus as the first full-time vice president. He has also served as a member of the Board of Trustees, the Dean of Academic Affairs and the Acting Head of EAP as well as the Acting President after the sudden loss of our first President, Dr. Mineo Nakajima. His advocacy for globalization and leadership have been an essential component of our university, and we are extremely grateful for his unwavering support.

Please find below a message from Professor Williams to all students.



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A big 'THANK YOU' to all at AIU!

As I sit here trying to survive the heat of the Tokyo summer, it is strange to think that my three years at AIU are coming to an end and that I shall be returning to the University of Leeds in the UK very soon. Four years ago, if you had told me that I would be spending the next three years of my life journey in Akita, I would never have believed you. But now, it feels equally strange to be leaving – and to be returning, in one sense to the familiar, but in another sense to the completely unknown.

I have learnt so much during my stay in Akita. I arrived with a whole series of preconceptions about the place – and about the AIU mission in particular. Some of these have been confirmed, some have been proven wrong. But the vast majority have been revised in the light of my experience on the ground here at AIU. Of course, when I arrived in September 2011, I was keen to contribute, in some small measure, to realizing the vision that President Nakajima was seeking to actualize. Little was I to know how this would be as much a formative experience for me as a chance to contribute to the bigger picture.

As I come to leave the campus, yes there are regrets: the missed opportunities, the unfinished conversations, the unfulfilled ideas. Of far greater consequence, however, is the sense of promise and optimism that I see pervading the campus. Over the first ten years of its existence, AIU has performed wonders in establishing its 'brand' and reputation as a unique type of institute of higher education in Japan. Even more in evidence, however, is the belief that this project has only just begun. The University has a clear plan for the next ten years, one that has been adopted by Akita Prefecture and that is designed to spell out a true definition for the idea of a 'Super Global University' that is so much in the news in Japan right now. I have total confidence that AIU is ideally positioned to lead the revolution that this entails - and will continue to do what I can from the other side of the globe to support these endeavors.

Mark Williams

Vice President for Academic Affairs

