

Seeking your Life Mission

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When I speak with young people about their dreams for the future, many are unsure of what they want to be or do. Especially during job-hunting, students find that self-analysis (自己分析) is very difficult, and then locating a job that fits one's goals can be even more challenging. Sometimes, even adults who graduated from university many years ago will say, "I don't know what I should do with my life."

Our school's mission statement includes the words, "Kwansei Gakuin ... inspires its members to seek their life missions," and this is an important ideal for our learning community, which includes people of many ages, both women and men, those with different sexual orientations, nationalities, religions, physical abilities, and types of wealth. I believe that all persons have unique, God-given gifts, which are influenced by their surroundings and choices that they make. Therefore, we cannot assume that everyone has the same needs and aspirations. Instead, by encouraging self-discovery and self-development, I hope that our community can truly appreciate and enjoy the diversity that enriches our culture, both here at school and in society.

Diversity within a community is not just a concept to make life interesting. As we face our daily tasks and try to address problems through classes, research, and organizational management, the contributions by members who have a variety of perspectives will enrich our alternatives and lead us to more satisfying conclusions. If everyone has the same educational and cultural experience, it may be easier to work together, but such a community would exclude many people living in Japan, and we will be less able to respond creatively to social problems.

Finding one's life mission may not be easy, but by taking a variety of classes, attending chapel, talking with friends and teachers, and participating in various activities, including volunteer work, and maybe even study abroad, a student can learn a great deal about himself or herself.

At Kwansei Gakuin, we still have to improve support for "mission-seeking" by members with disabilities, those with young children or family members who need special care, and those whose native language is not Japanese, just to give a few examples. However, in our ideals for the University, Kwansei Gakuin has identified "the creation of a community 'without fences'" as our goal; an inclusive community where differences do not become barriers, but are sources of strength and creativity.

As our motto, "Mastery for Service" implies, it is only when we master our own gifts and abilities that we are best able to serve one another. I pray that your life at Kwansei Gakuin will nurture you in your preparation for a life mission, and that you will find joy in supporting others in their journeys.

(院長)