

April 1, 2023

To All Faculty and Staff Members

### A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Hideaki Ichise  
Chairman of the Board of Directors  
Nanzan School Corporation

The following is a statement intended to share with Japanese society and the wider world the aims of Nanzan School Corporation as an educational organization. As a Catholic educational institution with an educational philosophy embodied in its motto *Hominis Dignitati* (For Human Dignity), Nanzan aims to impart a sense of “joy in learning” to each pupil and student at our places of learning and research and a sense of “joy in working together” to each member of the faculty and staff.

#### **The Origins of the Nanzan Motto**

On 8 September 1907 three members of the Society of the Divine Word (Societas Verbi Divine, abbreviated: SVD) who had been assigned for missionary work in Japan landed in Yokohama. Another member of the Society, Fr. Joseph Reiners, SVD (1874~1945), the future founder of Nanzan University, who had arrived in Japan two years later in August 1909, was acutely aware of the importance of Catholic education in Japan. With the conviction that “every person has been endowed with a precious life as a unique and irreplaceable individual,” and with the motto “be noble-minded, faithful, and honest,” he established Nanzan Middle School in 1932 and Nanzan Primary School in 1936, laying the foundations of the present day Nanzan School Corporation.

Since then, Nanzan School Corporation, with the cooperation of its faculty and staff, students and parents, and the dedication of many people of good will, has carried on the work of Fr. Reiners and developed it further. There has been major expansion through amalgamations with Nagoya Seirei School Corporation in 1995 and Misono Gakuin in 2016, and consolidation through the phasing out of three schools: Nagoya Seirei Women’s Junior College at the end of the 2004 academic year, the Faculty of Nanzan Women’s Junior College at Nanzan University at the end of the 2019 academic year, and Nanzan Kokusai Junior and Senior High School at the end of the 2022 academic year. As of April 1, 2023, Nanzan School Corporation has grown into a comprehensive Catholic School system with eight schools from kindergarten to university level in Aichi and Kanagawa Prefectures. Nanzan School Corporation aims at providing an education based on a Christian world view, with each individual school having its own history and school atmosphere while sharing the general orientation of the School Corporation embodied in its educational motto *Hominis Dignitati*.

The Nanzan motto originated with Fr. Albert Bold, SVD (1908-1990), the seventh Chairman of the Board of Directors of Nanzan School Corporation. However, the motto was not inspired by his personal ideals, but rather is deeply rooted in the Christian world view, which is based on the Biblical understanding that all human beings are, without exception, creatures made in the “image of God” and as such possess an inviolable character and dignity.

In the midst of the present coronavirus pandemic and the recent outbreaks of wars, hostilities, and natural disasters throughout the world, it is no exaggeration to say that the message of “human dignity” is one that needs to be heard not only within our Nanzan School Corporation but in the wider world and society in general. In these difficult times, the world seems to be moving more and more towards the recognition of the need to not only think about “working together” but also how to actually go about it. The

road to “coexisting with the other,” including nature, is a difficult one, but for humanity to survive, and not just survive in the most basic sense, but to live peacefully and happily, moving in this direction is necessary. It goes without saying that politics, economics, law, medicine, science, and education as well, all exist “for humanity,” and not vice versa. The question is whether all these are oriented towards the *true* happiness of *all* people. That is precisely what the educational and research activity of Nanzan School Corporation aims to achieve. I ask that each member school stays true to the Nanzan educational motto and puts it into practice in the particular circumstances of each individual school.

### **Putting the Nanzan Educational Philosophy into Practice**

When I became Chairman on April 1, 2017, I published a Chairman’s Position Paper in which I followed up on the Chairman’s Position Paper published on April 1, 2016 by my predecessor, Fr. Hans-Jürgen Marx, SVD, reaffirming the basic policy and the orientation of Nanzan School Corporation. On the occasion of my reappointment as Chairman, and in view of preparations for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Nanzan School Corporation to take place in 2032 ten years from now, I would like to explain and share with you, the faculty and staff, my understanding of the Nanzan philosophy of education, specifically the aspects of “Cultivation of Religious Sensibility,” “Intellectual Understanding and Intellectual Rigor,” “Social Contribution,” and “Cultivation of Internationality”.

#### Cultivation of a Religious Sensibility

This aspect forms the foundation of our educational and research activity as a Catholic educational institution. When speaking of religion, it is important to distinguish between two dimensions and to define their relationship to each other. First, there is the dimension of religion which can be termed universal religiosity, or religious sensibility, and which is common to all human beings. The second is the dimension of a particular, concrete religion, such as Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, etc. Religion in this sense can be thought of as a kind of “window” on the world. Looking from one of those “windows,” Christianity, the Nanzan schools offer opportunities to consider questions like “How does the world appear to us?” and “How can we “co-exist”?” The religions of the world, while maintaining their uniqueness and individuality, need to cooperate with each other and make a contribution to world peace. Christianity, too, is making a contribution to this effort. Of course, the approach of each member school of the School Corporation will be different. In the early childhood stage, actual experience is emphasized, while as a person grows, the use of intellectual and moral verbal expressions becomes necessary. Especially at the university level a more sophisticated and objective understanding is required, and it must be possible to engage in dialogue at an intellectual level with people of other viewpoints. This is connected to the next aspect of the Nanzan educational philosophy.

#### Intellectual Understanding and Intellectual Rigor

This aspect of our educational philosophy will also differ among the individual schools of the School Corporation. Nevertheless, there is a common understanding that all knowledge and learning is to be gained not in a dogmatic way, but by dialoging with others. It is important to possess an attitude that allows one to approach the truth while maintaining a sincere and honest relationship with others. Learning does not have a solely “intellectual” aspect, but requires a comprehensive approach. In that sense, the traditional division of the curriculum into “main subjects” (five main subjects) and the remaining “secondary subjects” needs to be reconsidered. All subjects are important and all are interconnected; there are no unimportant subjects. We should remind ourselves of the importance not only of “cognitive ability,” but also of the “non-cognitive” abilities, such as communication skills, empathy, and perseverance.

#### Social Contribution

This aspect is connected with the fact that the benefits of knowledge and learning should not be confined to benefit only the individual, but rather they are to be shared with the wider community.

From the very beginning Nanzan School Corporation has received strong support from the local community and we have grown and developed together with the local community. A total of 220,000 alumni have graduated from Nanzan schools and have been making a contribution towards the building up of a society based on promoting “Human Dignity.” While the nature of the relationship to the local community varies with each individual school, I ask that all of our schools continue their unique practice of “Human Dignity.” This social contribution also includes gratitude for the support received from the local community.

#### Cultivation of Internationality

This has been a major concern for Nanzan School Corporation since its beginning. Nanzan has always valued learning based on dialog and a respectful encounter with the various peoples and cultures of the world. In so doing, we also reaffirm the importance of learning about our own native culture, because without a proper understanding of one’s own culture and language, it is impossible to have a fruitful encounter with other cultures and languages. Only when we are aware of the fact that the lives of human beings as well as of plants and animals are supported through a variety of interconnections on the planet earth, “our common home” (cf. *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis), and only when we act on the realization that all of us are responsible for “the other” can we become truly international people.

We cannot put our educational philosophy into practice unless all constituent members of the School Corporation act together to meet the many challenges confronting us today. Cooperation is necessary for all of these tasks—achieving the targets indicated in the “Basic Financial Simulations” necessary for maintaining a healthy financial base, realizing the “Mid-range Plans (2020~2024)” that comprise the basic policies for each individual school’s objectives and activities plans, and compliance with “Governance Codes” for autonomous school management. Of course, conditions vary from school to school, but I ask all of you to consider your own situation and consider how to approach these issues. More specifically, I would like to propose the following key points as guidelines for putting our educational philosophy into practice. I ask you to focus on these points when making new initiatives, when reconsidering present initiatives, or when encountering difficulties.

- ① Maintaining a common identity as one School Corporation, while preserving the unique history and traditions of each individual school
- ② Promoting cooperation and the exchange of information among the individual schools
- ③ Promoting the merits of “Mission School” education
- ④ Strengthening ties with the local community, especially with alumni
- ⑤ Offering opportunities for faculty and staff to learn about the history and ideals of Nanzan School Corporation
- ⑥ Making the School Corporation a place where all constituent members can share in a common pride and joy

#### **Looking Towards the Future**

In this rapidly changing modern day society, it is impossible to predict how education in Japan and in the world will develop in the future. No matter how things might change, however, the educational philosophy of Nanzan schools will remain the same. Let us all follow the main orientation of our educational philosophy while prudently and honestly tackling the concrete challenges facing each of our individual schools. Respect for human dignity entails a responsibility towards “the other,” including nature. It is often said that one characteristic of human beings is “being responsible.” Being responsible or performing acts of “self-less love” that seek no reward will continue to be unique characteristics of a human dignity that can never be replaced by artificial intelligence or robots, no matter how much society changes.

Living a life of human dignity is not an abstract concept but is actualized by one’s practical way of life.

One could say that a life of human dignity is a way of life that enables one to find a “treasure” inside the other and allows it to shine forth. I ask that all members of the faculty and staff help the pupils and students of our Nanzan schools to discover the “treasure” inside themselves, to realize the preciousness of this treasure, and develop it so that it may lead them to the joy of being of service to others or to a greater cause. Finally, let me again repeat my request for the cooperation of all members of Nanzan School Corporation, so that we can offer an education in our schools that will form our graduates into people who will not merely affirm the status quo, but will be able to make a positive contribution to the building up of society that can meet the challenges of the future.