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Preface

Carolin Funck

To all new students of the School of Integrated Arts and Sciences and the Graduate School of Integrated Arts and Sciences, congratulations and welcome to our school. For those of you who enter the undergraduate programs, a new life will start – four precious years that will be different from your life so far and from your life after you graduate from university. My name is Carolin Funck, I am the head of our new department, Integrated Global Studies. I came to Japan 31 years ago from Germany. I had planned to study one year in Japan, and never dreamt of becoming something like a head of department in the future! After working at different universities around Japan, I settled down at this school exactly 20 years ago.

Actually, our School of Integrated Arts and Sciences, which we call “*Souka*” for short, was the first school that created a full four-year undergraduate program integrating human, social and natural studies based on a former liberal arts department in Japan and has a history of more than 40 years. In 2006, the Graduate School was added. After 40 years as one school with only one department, for the first time this year a new department will be added: Integrated Global Studies (IGS). In this department, on top of integrating arts and sciences, we also aim to integrate students from all kind of backgrounds and nationalities who will study together in English. So we strive to cross borders between disciplines as well as between students.

This is the first time that so many students who don’t speak Japanese will enter this school – a new adventure for students and teachers alike.

Since I have joined “*Souka*”, our undergraduate program has been changed three times completely. Each time, teachers would discuss thoroughly how to engage students in integrating arts and sciences and what integrating them actually means. To create new programs and then adjust them according to the needs of time and the problems they face has become the DNA of “*Souka*”. So when the plan came up to create a new department taught in English to enable more international students to study at Hiroshima University, it was only natural that “*Souka*” became the home for this new department.

At this school, there is a tradition that students in their second year look after the new first-year students and prepare some orientation events for them. Also, students create

and write this journal, “Hisho”, all by themselves. For the start of IGS, they began to prepare for these events in English and designed this special issue of “Hisho”. In German universities, students have their own student