

## DREAMING OF HOKUSEI: A HIGH SCHOOLER'S VISION



You must have imagined your ideal university life before you entered university. Was it a fantasy university life? Below, you'll find a high school student's vision which is filled with hope for Hokusei Gakuen University life. The article will make

you look back to your pre-university spirit. It might make you remember your dreams you had when you were fresh and full of energy. The Hokusei Times interviewed Kazuha Takazawa, a high school student, who is going to major in

economics at Hokusei next year. She already passed the entrance examination for admission by recommendation. She is one of the first students who underwent the new style entrance exam.

PAGE 6

### TRAVEL

GoToTravel Campaign in Hokkaido

PAGE 5

Intercultural experiences in Canada

PAGE 7

### COVID-19

Hokusei's measures to prevent Covid-19 spread

PAGE 12

### AROUND JAPAN

Should medical marijuana be legalized in Japan?

PAGE 11

New Japanese Prime Minister

PAGE 9

Niseko at a crossroads

PAGE 14

### CLIMATE CHANGE

## ECO-FRIENDLY HOKUSEI

The Hokusei Gakuen School Corporation which operates Hokusei Gakuen University and other schools is registered as a "Sapporo Eco-Member". Sapporo Eco-Member is a system that registers business establishments in Sapporo that engage in environmentally friendly activities inde-

pendently and introduces those activities to others in order to expand eco-friendly efforts like them. Hokusei Gakuen School Corporation is the only school education institution to be registered at Level 3, the highest standard...

PAGE 4

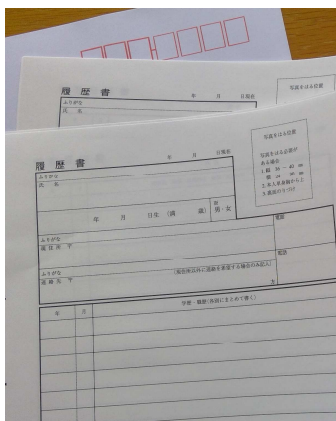
## ENCOURAGING VIDEO FROM HOKUSEI TO THE WORLD

Hokusei Gakuen University's student group created a video which encourages students who cannot study abroad, due to the pandemic. The video was shared on the group's Instagram account. Let's see why they did it, and the details. The group's name is HUIT, Hokusei Gakuen University Student Team. The group was made by Hokusei's International Education Center to promote international exchange between Japanese students and foreign students from overseas affiliated schools. The student group holds international events...

PAGE 13

# EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON JOB HUNTING

BECAUSE OF COVID-19, OPINIONS ARE DIVIDED ABOUT ITS EFFECT ON JOB HUNTING. SOME SPECIALISTS SAY AN "EMPLOYMENT ICE AGE" IS COMING, WHILE OTHERS SAY IT WILL NOT COME. THUS WE INTERVIEWED MR. MAEMURA, EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SECTION CHIEF AT HOKUSEI GAKUEN UNIVERSITY TO FIND OUT.



Specialists are sharply divided about the effect of Covid-19 on job hunting. Some specialists say that an "Employment Ice Age" is coming, which means a period that job hunters are desperate to get a job offer. Another specialist says it will not come. Mr. Maemura, Employment Support Section Chief at Hokusei Gakuen University says he does not think we can call it an "Employment Ice Age". We did a special interview to find out why.

## WHAT IS THE "EMPLOYMENT ICE AGE"?

"Employment Ice Age" is a period when job hunters who will graduate from college, universities, and so on, will have a very difficult time in finding a job despite having graduated and being desperate to get a job offers. In other words, the "Employment Ice Age" is when it is a "Buyer's Market", where the number of university or college students who want to get a job exceeds the number of jobs that companies want

to offer. According to Mizoue, a personnel journalist, there were three "Employment Ice Ages" so far, in 1991, in 2000, and in 2010. In 1991, it was caused because the bubble burst, in 2000, it was caused by a bursting IT bubble, and in 2010, it was caused because of the financial crisis in 2008, which is called "Lehman Shock" in Japan. Now, some people say a fourth "Employment Ice Age" is coming.

## SPECIAL INTERVIEW OF MR. SHUNICHIRO MAEMURA, EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SECTION

Mr. Maemura answered three questions and gave some advice for freshmen, sophomores, and juniors at Hokusei Gakuen University on behalf of Employment Support Office.

First, Mr. Maemura gave his opinion about whether an "Employment Ice Age" will come or not. There are 12 staff in the Employment Support Office in Hokusei Gakuen University, so he suggested that this will be the average answer of them. His answer is "I do not know if we can call it an Employment Ice Age, but jobs-to-applicants ratio will probably not be back to the level of last year." He says that jobs-to-applicants ratio is not that low this year, and it might not get better next year, but no

one knows. He continued by saying that job offer rates are one month later than usual, because people who were going to start job hunting in March or so could not start that time because of the COVID-19 state of emergency.

Also, it is said that job offers this year will not be as active as last year. He thinks job offers in the aviation industry and hotel industry will not be active in the near future. However, in the food service industry, some companies' profit increased compared to previous years. Therefore, he thinks we cannot call it an "Employment Ice Age" as a whole.

Second, he said that advice for job hunters has changed with COVID-19 compared to before the coronavirus pandemic. Using web PR videos or job interviews on ZOOM was a minority activity before. However, using web interviews has become popular now, so the Employment Support Office advises job hunters on how to survive job interview using the web now.

Also, there used to be face to face job fairs, so job hunters were able to listen to many companies' explanations including companies that they are

not interested in at that time. However, job fairs are held on web now, so they cannot easily listen to other companies' pitches. Thus, the Employment Support Office has started to tell job hunters how to find companies to apply to.

In addition, he told us that he does not recommend students be *shushokuronin*, which means people postponing job hunting to next year. For example, there is no guarantee that the aviation industry will recover next year. However, he said that going to technical schools to develop his or her ability during postponing might be a good idea.

He revealed that the number of students at Hokusei Gakuen junior college who transferred to Hokusei Gakuen University has increased this year, and some of their reasons to transfer is in order to improve their chances of getting a job offer from their desired company.

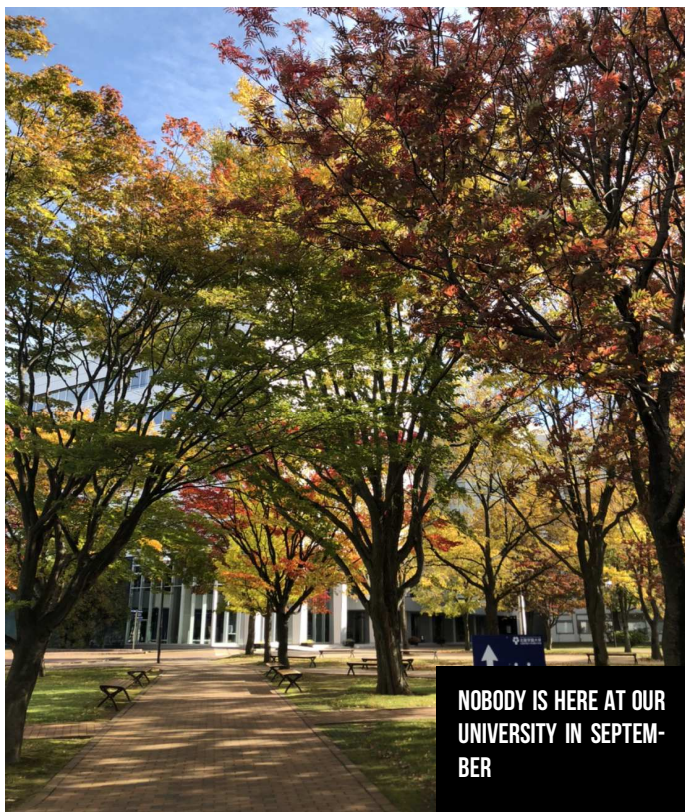
Finally, he gave this advice to freshmen, sophomores, and juniors at Hokusei Gakuen University: "the COVID-19 epidemic will finish at some point in the future, so do not lose hope and do something you can do now. Also, joining the career design program at Hokusei Gakuen University is good for students." ■

HINA IGARASHI



# IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON UNIVERSITY LIFE

DUE TO COVID-19, MANY UNIVERSITIES ARE FORCED TO HAVE ONLINE CLASSES IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE YEAR. MANY TEACHERS AND STUDENTS STRUGGLED TO HAVE ZOOM CLASSES. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, MANY UNIVERSITIES CONSIDERED STARTING FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES. FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES HAVE BEGUN AT HOKUSEI GAKUEN UNIVERSITY WHILE KEEPING INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES IN PLACE. ARE THERE ANY ACADEMIC PROBLEMS DUE TO SCHOOL CLOSURES AND ONLINE LESSONS?



NOBODY IS HERE AT OUR UNIVERSITY IN SEPTEMBER

## DIFFERENCES IN ACADEMIC ABILITY

Due to the spread of COVID-19, elementary, junior high, and high schools have been temporarily closed since March 2020. Many schools were not fully prepared for temporary closures, so students were forced to study at home by themselves.

It seems it widened the educational gap. The biggest reason is that study time has decreased significantly after the temporary closure. It is difficult for the students to study by themselves, and some students need to be helped by their

teacher.

## PROBLEMS CAUSED BY THE INFLUENCE OF COVID-19

I asked some students about their problems due to school closures and online classes. They were confused by their first online lesson. For example, students cannot ask their teacher questions even they want to. Moreover, some students have a bad internet environment so they cannot take lessons comfortably.

Not only university students are worried about their studies, but also

technical school students are worried too. They need to take many practical subjects and focus on practical skills and practical training. However, there are many problems to maintain teaching performance in online classes.

## IN-PERSON AND ONLINE CLASSES

Some students have started face-to-face classes in the second semester at Hokusei Gakuen University. In my seminar, I surveyed about classes in this situation. First, about 75% of the students had face-to-face classes. 60% of those students were satisfied with their face-to-face classes.

The reasons given by students were because they can see their friends and they felt inconvenienced by the ZOOM classes. Finally, I asked those who take online classes "Would you like to study in person at university?" More than half of them answered "No." The most common reason was that they have more free time because they do not have to spend time commuting.

## SHOULD JAPAN CHANGE TO ENROLLMENT IN SEPTEMBER?

The Japanese government considered whether to shift admission from April to September because of

the delay in schools opening. In a recent government survey, about the same percentage of respondents agreed and disagreed. The reasons for the opposition side are "Spring admission and graduation are Japanese tradition." "The Japanese government should spend more time considering it." On the other hand, the opinions of supporters are "Students can catch up with school delays" "It allows students to avoid exams in winter." "International students are easy to be accepted in September because the overseas graduation ceremony is in autumn."

## WHAT'S GOING ON IN SAPPORO NOW?

The number of infected people in Sapporo continues to rise. It is because temperatures are colder now here. Also, there was a cluster in a Sapporo junior high school for the first time. As household infections have increased, the number of elementary and junior high school students who are infected is increasing right now.

Students at universities in Sapporo have also been infected, so they must stay away from the city. Our university has already had cases of infection, so we should consider once again if we are going to do face-to-face classes.

NANA DEKURA

# ECO-FRIENDLY HOKUSEI GAKUEN

THE HOKUSEI GAKUEN SCHOOL CORPORATION WHICH OPERATES HOKUSEI GAKUEN UNIVERSITY AND OTHER SCHOOLS IS REGISTERED AS A "SAPPORO ECO-MEMBER". SAPPORO ECO-MEMBER IS A SYSTEM THAT REGISTERS BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS IN SAPPORO THAT ENGAGE IN ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES INDEPENDENTLY AND INTRODUCES THOSE ACTIVITIES TO OTHERS IN ORDER TO EXPAND ECO-FRIENDLY EFFORTS LIKE THEM. HOKUSEI GAKUEN SCHOOL CORPORATION IS THE ONLY SCHOOL EDUCATION INSTITUTION TO BE REGISTERED AT LEVEL 3, THE HIGHEST STANDARD.



Hokusei Front Yard

## WHAT IS A SAPPORO ECO-MEMBER?

The city of Sapporo registers establishments that voluntarily engage in environmentally friendly activities as "Sapporo Eco-Members". Business establishments located in Sapporo City that fulfil requirements such as reducing energy use and installing energy-saving equipment are registered in three stages, depending on the of those measures.

By announcing their efforts on the website and other

media, the program aims to expand the network of environmentally friendly approaches and to create a better environment and a city that preserves the earth.

## HOW GOOD IS A LEVEL 3 REGISTRATION?

On December 5, 2019, the Hokusei Gakuen School Corporation was registered at Level 3, the highest standard. Level 3 requires the school to receive one of the environmental management systems qualifications, such

as ISO 14001, ISO 14005, or Eco Action 21, and to have an environmental management system. Hokusei Gakuen School Corporation is the only school that is registered as Level 3. The school says it will maintain its efforts for continuous improvement in the future.

## WHAT ACTIVITIES WERE ACTUALLY CARRIED OUT WHEN THEY REGISTERED AS A SAPPORO ECO-MEMBER?

Hokusei Gakuen submits an "Environmental Protection Action Report" to Sapporo City every year. Businesses above a certain size are required to submit this report to Sapporo City. In this report, they report on their carbon dioxide emissions in numbers and describe the reasons why they have not achieved or have achieved their 1% annual reduction goal.

In addition, Hokusei School consumes more than 1,500 kiloliters of energy per year, and as a result, the school is classified by the government as a "Specified Utility". For this reason, they submit regular reports that are based on laws regarding the rational use of energy to the Hokkaido Bureau of Economy, Trade, and Industry and the Ministry of Education. They say that the targets in 2020 were

achieved in each report.

## HOW DID THEY FEEL WHEN THEY WERE REGISTERED?

The fact that Hokusei Gakuen's efforts have been recognized is encouraging for them in the future. There has been no particular reaction from outside the university, but given the Level 3 registration, Hokusei Gakuen has to continue to work on reducing energy and carbon dioxide emissions at the same time.

## POST-REGISTRATION ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS

So far, the university has promoted energy visualization by using digital signage on the first floor of Building C, the adoption of motion sensors in the corridors and restrooms, and the promotion of summer and winter cool biz and warm biz. In addition to this, they have also switched to LED lighting in Research Building One in 2019.

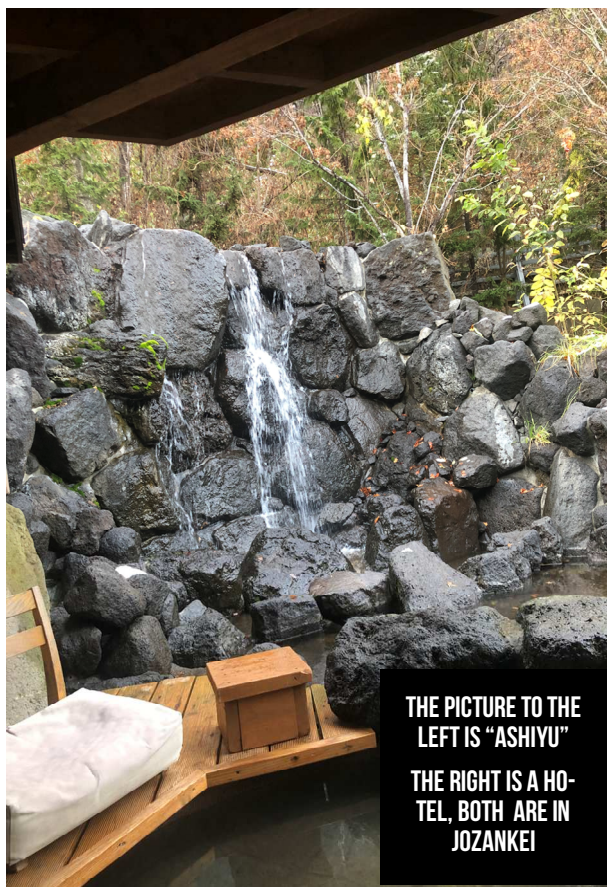
On top of this, in 2020, they switched to LED lighting, mainly in Building B, to reduce annual energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions.

From next year, they will continue their efforts to encourage students, faculty, and staff to reduce energy use.

MOE OSAWA



# GO TO TRAVEL CAMPAIGN IN HOKKAIDO



THE PICTURE TO THE LEFT IS "ASHIYU"  
THE RIGHT IS A HO-TEL, BOTH ARE IN JOZANKEI



virus was relatively calm, and the use of restaurants was remarkable.

According to one restaurant located in the Chugoku region of Japan, "the number of visitors has increased slightly compared to around June." And according to one hotel located in the Kanto region, "thanks to the GoTo Travel Campaign, more and more people came to stay here."

## INTERVIEW OF MY FRIEND

I asked a friend who actually travelled using the Go To Travel Campaign. She stayed at a hotel in Jozankei near Sapporo with her friend. Normally, the accommodation fee is about 15,000 yen per person, but it seems that they could stay for about 9,000 yen. Go To Travel Campaign users could stay at hotels where they can't usually stay at because of high expense. Some were also able to upgrade their rooms. Also, my friend not only enjoyed great food at the hotel but also went to a café near the hotel using discount coupons. She got 4,000 yen worth of cou-

pons, so it was almost free. In addition, she used the surplus coupons for shopping. She said, "thanks to this campaign, I enjoyed the trip at a cheap price."

## STAYCATION

Do you know the word of "Staycation"? It is a coined word derived from "Stay" and "Vacation". It refers to spending a vacation by staying at an accommodation nearby your home, rather than spending a vacation abroad. There are two benefits. The first is that you can forget daily life easily. For example, there are hotels in the city where you can see nature or night views. You can enjoy scenery that you cannot normally see at home.

Another good point is that you can have breakfast and dinner prepared by famous chefs there. Furthermore, transportation costs are cheap. A hotel where you stay for a staycation is usually close by, so transport does not cost much. Instead of paying for transport, you can upgrade your hotel room.

What you can do is limited because of coronavirus, but you can enjoy the small perks like this. It is a good idea to use it such perks sometimes to take a break or relieve stress.

AYANE KAIMAI

## WHAT IS THE "GO TO CAMPAIGN" ?

According to the announcement by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, this is a campaign to stimulate revitalization of regions in Japan affected by the coronavirus pandemic. People can stay in accommodation at a cheaper price than usual. Additionally, they can get and use discount coupons.

These coupons can be used at various local shops and restaurants. Hokkaido is popular as a tourist destination because it has rich nature and delicious food. Thanks to this campaign, more and more tourists are visiting Hokkaido.

## THE EFFECT OF THIS CAM-

## PAIGN IN HOKKAIDO

Since the start of 2020, the economy has dropped sharply. However, it recovered significantly when the Goto Travel campaign was started. According to an economic trend survey from July to September 2020 by Hokkaido Shimibun Press, the business condition judgement index showing corporate performance is increased by 51.9 points from the previous quarter.

Due to the impact of the state emergency caused by coronavirus, it was the second lowest in the previous term. However, the rate of increase this time was the largest since the comparable period from January to March 1989. In September, the spreading of corona-

# HOW HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IMAGINE HOKUSEI UNIVERSITY LIFE

YOU MUST HAVE IMAGINED YOUR IDEAL UNIVERSITY LIFE BEFORE YOU ENTERED UNIVERSITY. WAS IT A FANTASY UNIVERSITY LIFE? BELOW, YOU'LL FIND A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT'S VISION WHICH IS FILLED WITH HOPES FOR HOKUSEI GAKUEN UNIVERSITY LIFE. THE ARTICLE WILL MAKE YOU LOOK BACK TO YOUR PRE-UNIVERSITY SPRIT. IT MIGHT MAKE YOU REMEMBER YOUR DREAMS YOU HAD WHEN YOU WERE FRESH AND FULL OF ENERGY.



"MAY I PASS THE ENTRANCE EXAM OF HOKUSEI" IS WRITTEN ON THE BACK OF THE "EMA"

The Hokusei Times interviewed Kazuha Takazawa, a high school student, who is going to major in economics at Hokusei next year. She already passed the entrance examination for admission by recommendation. She is one of the first students who underwent the new style entrance examination during this unusual situation.

**WHAT WERE THE DIFFICULT POINTS OF THE ENTRANCE EXAM DURING THIS EXTRAORDINARY SITUATION?**

Kazuha said that she had to take an interview test for screening. Despite this, she could not practice for the interview face to face due to COVID-19. She asked her teacher to help her practice over the phone. She said, "I was very nervous because the only thing I could do was imagine. I did not even know how to knock on the door. I kept trying to visualize based on the advice from my teacher over and over again."

Moreover, she could not go to open campus events. Hokusei has a limited number of places for people to attend open campus because of the pandemic. She said, "While I was de-

**I WAS VERY NERVOUS  
BECAUSE THE ONLY  
THING I COULD DO  
WAS IMAGINE.**

bating whether to apply for the open campus, it reached the fixed number of applicants in the blink of an eye."

**HOW DO YOU IMAGINE HOKUSEI GAKUEN UNIVERSITY LIFE TO BE?**

She answered, "speaking of Hokusei, I imagine English!" Although she could not take part in the open campus, she was able to collect information about Hokusei. She works part time near Hokusei, and there are a lot of Hokusei students as her coworkers. She said, "I heard a lot about Hokusei from my coworkers. They said they enjoy their university lives and Hokusei was the right choice even though there are a lot of assignments." She thought if she goes to Hokusei, she can study both economics and English very hard. Also, she watched the Hokusei Youtube PR videos which describe what students can learn there.

She said, "When I watched the videos, I felt a sense of closeness with Hokusei. I could imagine how professors have a deep relationship with students."

She has images of Hokusei



## UNIVERSITY STUDENTS DO NOT WRITE DOWN BY HAND ANYMORE!

giving priority to English education and having a friendly atmosphere.

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS?

We asked her how she thinks about the difference

between university life and high school life. She said, "University students are adults! I feel like they are mature for their age even though they just a year senior to me. Also, I'm envious of university students because they can go anywhere they want!" According to her claims, university students are free. They can choose what to study by themselves unlike high school students.

Her imaginary university students do not have a big pencil case, notebooks, and textbooks. They al-

ways carry their laptop anywhere they go, and they do not write anything down by hand anymore. She said, "I can't wait when I will graduate from my high school!"

### WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN THE NEXT FOUR YEARS?

We asked her what her goals for university life are. She answered that "I would like to study abroad someday, and I'm interested in especially JICA. I think having knowledge of the economy is an effective way to become a

member of JICA.

"That's why I chose the Economics Department at Hokusei," she said. She made her choice of university and department by considering her dreams. In addition, she said she wants to improve her PC skills for job hunting. She is full of motivation and hope. People would have hoped for a good future before they started something new. It might be a good time to remember your fresh feelings in this tough time.

YURI KASHIMA

### WHAT IS THE NEW STYLE OF ENTRANCE EXAMINATION?

The National Center Test for University Admissions had been used by most universities in Japan from 1990 to 2020. However, it was abolished, and in place of this, the new Common Test for University Admissions will start from 2021.

## OVERSEAS EXCHANGE

# INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCES IN CANADA

THESE DAYS, THERE ARE PEOPLE INCLUDING STUDENTS WHO WANT TO STUDY ABROAD OR EXPERIENCE NON-JAPANESE CULTURES. HOKUSEI STUDENTS CAN DO THESE BY USING A SYSTEM OF OVERSEAS TRAINING.



Hokusei Times interviewed one student who participated in a short-term English study

abroad program for four weeks to hear about her experiences in Canada. She told us what she did

in the program and how she felt about it. In addition, she introduced us to the differences she felt in Canada.

The program took place in Ottawa, Canada's capital city, where she attended Carleton University with other participants. The mainly purpose of the program is for language training, and participants did not attend regular classes at the university. However, they attended classes that were specially prepared for them. In the mornings, they took classes at the university

and in the afternoons, volunteer students from the university gave them tours of the city of Ottawa. The class was about learning about Canadian culture, famous cuisine, history, and animals.

They also made groups of Hokusei students to do research and present it in a poster. There were two such presentations during the program.

The first one was to pick one country and put together its customs and culture. For the second one, students could pick their own theme. The stu-

dent I interviewed summarized the differences between Japan and Canada that they felt in their daily life with another student.

Making the most of two weekends within the program, she went to Montreal and visited the Notre Dame Cathedral with all of the Hokusei students and a few local students.

Also, when she went to Canada, there were three weekends in a row due to Canadian holidays, so she used these weekends to go to Toronto. This adventure was not originally part of the plan, but all of the Hokusei students took part in the event, and they had free time to visit various places.

Through this program, she told us that she has gained many benefits, but she also has regrets.

First, the benefits. For one, this was the first time for her to go abroad and it was good to experience a culture and lifestyle outside of Japan. Secondly, she was able to develop a good relationship with her host family. She was impressed by their kindness, and she is still exchanging emails with them even after a year. Thirdly, there are many things that she has to manage on her own, and now she is able to act on her own judgment.

She does have some regrets through. She participated in this program

when she was a freshman and did not know enough English to communicate as well as she would have liked; therefore, she could not get actively involved with the local university students because she was not sure if her English would be understood. Moreover, when she heard that other students went to many places and were involved with many people, she wished she had been able to do something like them with such ease.

Finally, we describe the differences she noticed between Japan and Canada. Of course, there were differences in architecture. Compared to Japan, Canadian houses are larger, with larger yards and

wider streets. Daily life was also different. Canada does not have neighborhood communal trash stations for household trash, so people can leave their trash in front of their house and a garbage collector comes and collects it. Lastly, even the food makes a difference, for instance, the amount of food in each meal was larger in Canada.

Going abroad is not always a good thing. Many people have gone abroad to study and have and unsuccessful or unpleasant experiences. However, it will be going to be a big deal in your life. Experiencing life abroad will bring difficulties, but it will certainly be meaningful in your life.

JUNYA IZUMI

## EDITORIAL STAFF

# HOKUSEI TIMES EDITORIAL STAFF FOR FALL 2020

**No one can deny that 2020 has been a challenging year for Hokusei. For students, faculty, staff, and of course families of everyone associated with Hokusei, it has been tough. But we've got through it. Onwards and upwards with plenty to look forward to.**

In this issue of The Ho-

kusei Times, reporters have covered a range of topics. For example, Yuri talked to a high school student accepted into Hokusei for Spring 2021—what are their dreams and hopes for Hokusei? What's their image of student life here? Yuri gets to the bottom of it with an interesting interview. Sayaka updates us on Hokusei's

efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19 on campus in the second semester. Moving away from Hokusei, Hitomi ponders the state of medical marijuana in Japan, and Ryo takes us through the details of Japan's new prime minister.

**EDITORIAL STAFF**  
Nana Dekura

Sayaka Hirota  
Ayane Kaimai  
Hitomi Sugiyama  
Taisei Satou  
Shiori Takeuchi  
Hina Igarashi  
Junya Izumi  
Yuri Kashima  
Ryousuke Kosaka  
Moe Osasawa  
Juri Ooyama  
Ryou Sasayama  
Keita Tanaka





# NEW JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER

ON SEPTEMBER 16TH, JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER CHANGED FROM SHINZO ABE TO YOSHIHIDE SUGA. HE IS THE 99TH JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER. WHILE JAPAN IS STILL SUFFERING FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, THE CHANGE OF THE COUNTRY'S LEADER IS A BIG EVENT. CAN HE IMPROVE THE SITUATION OF JAPAN? CAN HE BECOME A HERO OF JAPAN? HERE, HOKUSEI TIMES INTRODUCES HIS BACKGROUND AND POLICIES.



## MR. SUGA'S BACKGROUND

Mr. Suga was born in 1948 and is now 72 years old. Do you know what kind of family he was born in? You would guess that he was born into a wealthy family because he is the prime minister of a country.

However surprisingly, he was born to a family of strawberry farmers in Akita prefecture. As the eldest son of the farmer, and he graduated from high school while helping his family. Then he went to Tokyo and worked at a cardboard factory, but the labor was hard for him, so he quit the job after two months.

After that, he continued to study for university entrance exams for two years and entered Hosei University. Then he got a job,

where he admired politicians and began his journey to become a politician.

## MR. SUGA'S BIG EVENT IN 2019

In 2019, when he was working as Chief Cabinet Secretary of the Abe Cabinet, he was given a major role. It was the announcement of a new era "Reiwa". By playing this

**HE IS SAID TO HAVE MADE A BIG SUCCESS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES BECAUSE OF HIS UNIQUE BACKGROUND**

important role, his existence became more familiar among people as the

"Reiwa Ojisan" ("Ojisan" means old man).

This makes him known for his surprising aspects, such as that he has a sweet tooth—he loves eating pancakes—and he does 100 sit-ups every day.

## MR. SUGA'S POLICIES

What will he do as Prime Minister? He announced a lot of policies in the 203<sup>rd</sup> extraordinary Diet session, so Hokusei Times will introduce three of them which are important for Japan.

First, because he comes from a family of farmers, he pays attention of the decline of Japanese agriculture and agrees with the TPP and RCEP trade agreements. He wants to increase Japanese agricultural exports and domestic consumption.

Second, he is planning to realize a carbon-neutral society by 2050 in Japan. He is trying for radical change of old policy on coal-fired power generation, by emphasizing the use of solar cells and carbon recycling. Through this innovation, he wants to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions completely.

Third, he is promoting the digitization of administration and education. Many problems have been highlighted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so he has

shown he thinks that it is important to change the traditional ways of contact which have high risk of infection to non-contact ways which have low risk of infection.

For example, introduction of remote work and online education, integration of health insurance cards and My Number cards, and the digitization of driver's licenses. By doing things like these, he will reduce wasted habits and create the "With Corona era".

**"REIWA OJISAN", WHO BECAME PRIME MINISTER HAS NOT ONLY A HIGH DEGREE OF POPULARITY BUT ALSO MANY GOOD POLICIES**

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Japanese people put their hopes on his career that has made steady efforts that are not like a politician and his existence that is familiar not only to old people but also to young people.

Will his appointment as Prime Minister be an opportunity to make positive changes in Japan in the future and will he become a hero of Japan, taking advantage of his perspective of what he grew up in an ordinary environment? Only time will tell.

RYO SASAYAMA

# A NEW STYLE OF ENGLISH CAMP

DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, THE ANNUAL HOKUSEI ENGLISH CAMP WILL BE HELD THIS YEAR WITH A PRESENTATION SUBMISSION FORMAT.



## A NEW STYLE ENGLISH CAMP AT HOKUSEI

"English Camp in Hokusei" was held online in 2020. This project has run since 2016, and 2020 will be the fifth year. The members who participated in this English camp were supposed to spend two days together interacting in English, and performing an English drama at the end.

The biggest benefit of this camp is that students are able to understand the importance of accepting various values and learn practical English conversation skills through communicating with other students.

In 2020, however, due to the spread of Covid-19, they decided to hold an

online presentation contest called "English Camp in Hokusei Online 2020". The participants made a video presentation in English based on the theme and submitted it to the secretariat.

Each group had to be three to five members, and the length of the video had to be between two and three minutes.

Also, they were supposed to display the group name and the title of the video in English at the beginning of the video. The organizing committee reviewed the videos and selected the winners of each award.

## ARE THERE PRIZES?

There are five prizes; Ho-

kusei prize, English Language prize, Humor prize, Technical prize and Originality prize. The winners were announced on the university's official website between mid and late December 2020.

A certificate and a prize, a 1,000 yen book card, was given to each member of the winning group. After the winners were announced, all participants received a certificate of participation and a souvenir by post.

## WHAT IS THE THEME?

The theme of the presentations was "Introducing a place in Hokkaido to people around the world". In the video, each group had to choose one interesting place in Hokkaido and

explain the details to foreign people to make them curious about that place.

## WHO COULD PARTICIPATE?

About entry qualifications, first and second year students enrolled in a high school in Hokkaido were eligible for this contest. Among them, they needed people who are interested in and willing to learn various languages, including English. However, it was recommended that students have a level of English that is between Pre-2nd and 2nd grade of the Practical English Proficiency Test.

## FREE TO JOIN!

This contest did not cost any money, so anyone was free to participate. Also, the participants could learn English by introducing interesting places in Hokkaido, which not only expanded their international point of views, but also leads to an understanding of the local culture.

Even though students could not share ideas or give opinions with foreign students in English, explaining certain places in a simple yet understandable way in English is definitely a big opportunity to learn practical speaking skills for them.

JURI OYAMA



# SHOULD MEDICAL MARIJUANA BE LEGALIZED IN JAPAN?

IN RECENT YEARS, CANNABIS TREATMENT HAS BEEN GAINING ATTENTION AROUND THE WORLD, AND 23 COUNTRIES HAVE LEGALIZED MEDICAL MARIJUANA. HOWEVER, IN JAPAN, THERE HAS BEEN NO MOVE TO LEGALIZE IT YET. WE NEED TO KNOW AND THINK DEEPLY ABOUT MEDICAL MARIJUANA.



THE FIRST ROWS OF CANNABIS SEEDLINGS ON THE FARM AT KÉKERENGU  
PHOTO : RNZ/TRACY NEAL

## WHAT IS MEDICAL MARIJUANA?

Medical marijuana is often thought of as a type of cannabis, but it is actually the use of cannabis for medical purposes. However, the ingredients of cannabis used for non-medical and medical marijuana are slightly different. THC and CBD are the main cannabinoids of marijuana, and it's the THC that gets a person high and CBD has a relaxing effect. The difference between recreational marijuana and medical marijuana is the difference in the content of these two ingredients. Recreational marijuana has a higher content of THC, while medical marijuana has a higher content of CBD.

## THE BENEFITS OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA

Medical marijuana is often used as a pain reliever. In addition, it is said that there are 200 to 250 diseases that medical marijuana can help with. For example, major diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's, HIV, and chronic conditions such as insomnia and stress. Additionally, one of the benefits of medical marijuana is its cheapness. Medical marijuana does not cost much to grow and process. For this reason, medical marijuana is inexpensive to obtain and can continue to be used by people who are not financially well-off.

## THE DANGERS OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA

One of the dangers of medical marijuana is dependency. Some people

are concerned that medical marijuana can be a gateway drug. This means that the use of medical marijuana could lead more people to turn to dangerous drugs. In fact, many people seem to start using marijuana for recreational use after using medical marijuana to treat a serious injury.

## MEDICAL MARIJUANA IN JAPAN

Many countries around the world have legalized med-

ical marijuana, and the movement is growing stronger and stronger. But why is medical marijuana not legalized in Japan? The primary reason would be the image of marijuana. Many people in Japan are less knowledgeable about marijuana than other countries and there is a strong perception of its dangers. Also, medical care in Japan is relatively better than in other countries. This is probably why there is a strong tendency to treat with medicines instead of using medical marijuana.

## LEGALIZATION AND MEASURES

Medical marijuana has great benefits, but it also has disadvantages. Research on medical marijuana is still in progress, so more benefits or side effects may be discovered in the future. It would be dangerous to legalize it in Japan just because it has been legalized in many other countries. In order to legalize medical marijuana, the Japanese medical and legal aspects must be considered as well as the advantages and disadvantages. If medical marijuana is to be legalized, measures should be taken to combat the side effects and drug abuse.

HITOMI SUGIYAMA

MEDICAL MARIJUANA IS NOT WELL KNOWN IN JAPAN, BUT IT IS WIDELY KNOWN ABROAD

# HOKUSEI'S MEASURES TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE COVID-19



Covid-19 has been spreading rapidly recently. It seemed to settle down once previously, but perhaps because of the "Go to Travel" domestic tourism campaign, the number of infected people is rapidly increasing all over Japan. As of December 2020, Hokkaido is currently at Alert Stage3, with the number of infected people sitting at 2,359.

There are many rules that prevent the spread of the Covid-19, for example, when we take a bus or subway, most windows are open to create air flow, we need to shop alone to avoid increasing of infection, or when you need to have a meeting in person, make sure to keep distance from the others and wear masks and so on. Covid-19 completely changed our life this year.

According to Nikkei Shin-

bun news, 20% of students in Japan consider dropping out of university because of losing their part-time job, or their family finances were under pressure due to tuition fees. For us, students, in order to study safely, the university introduced a lot of rules too.

## CLUB ACTIVITIES

First, Hokusei Gakuen University is currently at Alert Stage 2-A which means students try to go to university as little as possible and in principle, take lessons only via distance learning such as ZOOM. In case of club activities, Hokusei's guidelines said we can do club activities only online. The alert stage was just pulled up to Stage 2-A on November 13 because of rapidly increasing number of COVID-19 cases.

Before that, we were able to do club activities just

like we used to do, but with many rules. First, we couldn't enter the gym until 6 pm and we had to leave the gym before 8 pm. Second, when we enter the gym, we had to wear masks and use hand sanitizer. Third, we could not use the changing rooms to avoid crowded and confined spaces with poor ventilation.

## DISTANCE LEARNING (ZOOM)

Instead of doing face-to-face classes, Hokusei decided to do online classes using ZOOM. Thanks to this, we can avoid crowded and confined spaces with poor ventilation. In addition, it is no longer necessary to get ready early in the morning and go to school.

We can use that time for studying, doing assignments, or trying new things. In the first month

of distance learning, it was difficult for many students to get used to it. Some students could not attend classes because they did not have a computer or their internet environment was poor. Hokusei helped students to improve the internet environment for them. Thanks to this, most students can now take classes comfortably.

## TAKING STUDENTS BODY TEMPERATURE AND ATTENDANCE CONFIRMATION

Hokusei manages when students come to school and when they leave school by scanning their student ID card. If a student happens to become infected, this allows the university to identify when the student came to school and how many hours the student spent at university.

Hokusei also takes students temperature every time students enter the main university building. There is a monitor that shows us our body temperature. These measures are thorough, and students who have high body temperature cannot enter university.

Security guards are always at the entrance to the university to monitor the success of this measure. With the help of these, professors and students, the university can take various measures against the Covid -19.

SAYAKA HIROTA



# ENCOURAGING VIDEO FROM HOKUSEI TO THE WORLD



私たちがまた、  
あなたと世界を繋ぐその日まで

**Hokusei Gakuen University's student group created a video which encourages students who cannot study abroad due to the pandemic. The video is shared on the Instagram account of the group. Let's see why they did it, and the details.**

The group's name is HUIT, Hokusei Gakuen University Student Team. The group was made by Hokusei's International Education Center to promote international exchange between Japanese students and foreign students from overseas affiliated schools. The stu-

dent group holds international events once a month every year.

In 2019, it held events with the theme of summer festivals and tea party where students could have a good chat with each other and so on. However, in 2020, due to the spread of the new coronavirus, all acceptance of international students to Hokusei was suspended.

Furthermore, face-to-face events cannot be held as usual on campus, and this

situation continues. In the first semester of 2020, all classes were held online, and students could not go to the university. There were very few people on campus, so the school was very quiet.

Meanwhile, in July 2020, one video was posted on Instagram. That was a message video by HUIT for those who gave up on studying abroad and all people whose life was changed.

At the beginning of the video, there are many nostalgic photos of past events. And in the latter half of the video, students from all over the world appeared, and in each language, they strongly said the message "Let's overcome this difficult time of corona together. If you do your best now, a bright future will surely come". It's a very moving and energetic video. I would like everyone to see it.

The leader of the organization that made this video responded to our questions about the video.

## WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO MAKE THIS VIDEO?

The leader answered that currently, there are many students who have postponed their study abroad due to the influence of the coronavirus. Others had to return home from overseas earlier than planned.

I also think that many people are worried about the future. However, even if our dreams and goals do not come true now, we wanted to convey the message that if we do not give up, there will always be light in the future. I made this video because I want people to feel better.

## WHAT IS YOUR FUTURE ACTIVITY POLICY?

Since the effects of the coronavirus are likely to be prolonged, I would like to hold many international exchange events online. In November, we held a joint online event with a partner school in the United Kingdom.

At that time, I realized again that many people participated, and everyone has the desire to have international exchanges. And many people have asked us to hold such an event again, so HUIT will continue to do our best.

Finally, I think that many people are now frustrated because they cannot do what they want because of the spread of the coronavirus. However, after watching this video, I was convinced that if we overcome the present, a bright future will surely come. Let's do our best together.

In addition, I look forward to the success of HUIT in the future.

TAISEI SATO

# INTERNATIONAL RESORT NISEKO AT CROSSROADS

NISEKO IS A PLACE WHERE CROWDS AND TOURISTS COME TO VISIT JAPAN FOR GOOD QUALITY SNOW, THE JAPOW IN WINTER. HOWEVER, THIS SEASON LOOKED DIFFERENT THAN USUAL. THE HIRAFU AREA WAS QUIET AND THERE WERE VERY FEW TOURISTS AND HOLIDAY MAKERS EVEN IN MARCH. CORONAVIRUS HAD A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE REGION OF NISEKO.



## EFFECT OF CORONAVIRUS

On February 14, the first case of coronavirus was confirmed in Hokkaido. Furthermore, on Feb. 28, after the first case was reported, there were an extra 66 cases, so the Governor of Hokkaido declared a state of emergency and called for residents to refrain from going out.

Countries around the world restricted travel to Japan. One company in Niseko essentially dismissed foreign workers expecting that the pandemic would have a bad impact. The majority of businesses in Niseko would have lost their winter profits during the pandemic as there were so few tourists and holiday makers around Niseko as foreign governments insisted that citizens return to their home country during this time.

## BREAKING THROUGH OF CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

As time passed the infection rate of coronavirus increased more and more in Japan. After the emergency declaration was finally over in Japan on April 16, there were still quite a few foreigners in Niseko. Even if they wanted to return to their country, the prices of flights had soared or had been cut off and they were forced to remain. On the other hand, some foreigners have chosen not to return to their home country.

Mr. Garth Caleb (25) came to Niseko from Australia on a working holiday visa in November 2019. He said he had 29 days of work in January but surprisingly only three days in March.

He mentioned that the company understood the economic situation due to Coronavirus, but he did not want to miss out on any of the time of his working holiday visa as he could only apply once, and hoped that the situation would be back to normal and could travel around Japan. This was his reason to stay in Japan.

The company he worked for in the winter arranged for foreigners who decided to stay in Niseko to work on a farm, and he says he has been working at the farm five days a week since late April.

## SUPPORT FOR LOCALS

In the Niseko area, various regional initiatives are underway for helping restaurants damaged by the decreased number of tourists and the government requests to refrain from going out.

One of these examples, aimed at residents in the local area, is opening the area in front of the promotion bureau government building entrance as a free of charge space to sell lunch boxes and creating a website for delivery and takeaway service.

The purpose is to promote a "new Hokkaido style" in Shiribeshi jurisdiction for restaurants trying new business styles.

## PROBLEMS COME TO THE FOREFRONT

The coronavirus pandemic highlighted some problems in Niseko that have existed even before the pandemic. For example, Niseko relies on tourists from foreign countries and mainly rely on profits from the winter season.

Most of the annual income for tourism-related companies in Niseko is earned in winter at facilities where foreigners are the main customers. Niseko must expand and improve the summer activities and create a new style that doesn't rely only on the benefits of winter.

This will be a good opportunity to appeal not only to tourists in Hokkaido but also to Japanese tourists and to improve the pricing and hospitality of expensive food and drink which is focused on foreigners.

## SUMMARY

There are still opportunities to seize new customers such as when Shinkansen arrives in Sapporo and holding the Olympics. It would be great to see and create a Niseko that can be flexible and respond to various situations and that many people want to visit regardless of country, region, or time of year.

SHIORI TAKEUCHI



# INTRODUCING THE UNIVERSITY CO-OP

DO YOU KNOW THERE IS A CONVENIENT SERVICE IN HOKUSEI GAKUEN UNIVERSITY? IT IS THE UNIVERSITY CO-OP. THERE ARE A LOT OF KINDS OF SERVICES SUCH AS SCHOOL CAFETERIA, PURCHASE OF GOODS AND TRAVEL SERVICES. HOWEVER, MOST STUDENTS DO NOT KNOW ALL OF THE SERVICES THAT THE CO-OP OFFERS. FOR THEM, WE'VE PICKED UP A FEW OF THE POPULAR CO-OP SERVICES.



## TRAVELING SERVICES

First, we'd highly recommend the Melbourne tour. If you want to study English or you learn about different cultures, you should try this. However only first and second grade students can join this tour. Students go Melbourne for a week on this tour and they experience a lot of things. For example, going to The University of Melbourne and volunteer. They can also do sightseeing. The University of Melbourne is one of the higher education schools in Melbourne. It is historical so you may learn something that you can learn only there.

Additionally, there are many opportunities where participants communicate with local workers and students so you can try to speak a lot in English. Unfortunately, the tour this

year was canceled because of COVID-19. I hope this service will restart from next year. Why not trying the challenge of traveling?

## SCHOOL CAFETERIA

I think most students use the school cafeteria more than once. However, some students do not use the cafeteria. For them, here's some good points about the cafeteria. First of all, there are many kinds of dishes such as ramen, side dishes and curry and rice. There is the popular menu like Tatsuta-don but the school cafeteria also makes seasonal dishes. Those seasonal dishes are also delicious so you should try it. I recommend boiled mackerel in miso because it goes nicely with rice and it's tasty.

Additionally, on the cafe-

teria receipt that you get after paying, you can learn about the amount of nutrition in your food. Nutrition is separated to red, green and yellow 'points'. Red means nutrition that forms your body like protein. Green means nutrition that makes your body healthy, such as vitamins. Yellow means nutrition that becomes energy for your body, such as carbohydrates. To be healthy, the cafeteria recommends two red points per meal, one green point, and five

yellow points. To make sure to stay healthy, you have to watch this carefully.

The cafeteria also makes appetizers. They look so delicious. When you have a party at university, you should order these.

## SHOPPING

Many students may not know but we can do shopping at the co-op. We can buy computers and seasonal food and so on. They will deliver and there are a lot of products so it is very convenient. One of my friends bought a computer on the Co-op site (<https://online.univ.coop/catalog/>) he said "I can buy it so cheap." Products on the Co-op site may be cheaper than other shopping sites so we recommend you to compare their site and other sites to save money.

During the pandemic, people now avoid going out. Therefore it may be good to buy something using the Co-op web service. If you have something that you want, you should search the web site first.

We showed some good points of the university co-op but there are many more. They help us with various things in life. Please take this opportunity to find out about the university co-op.

KEITA TANAKA

THIS IS A USEFUL PLACE  
FOR HOKUSEI GAKUEN  
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

# HOKUSEI CLUB ACTIVITIES



This has been a strange year not only for the country but also for Hokusei Gakuen University due to the coronavirus pandemic. In Hokusei, most of the classes were online in the first semester, and there were almost no face-to-face classes. Of course, extra-curricular activities were not allowed, and all "circle" activities and club activities were suspended.

That is why, this was said by a member of an athletic club activity in Hokusei, athletic club activities in Hokusei focused on online activities and sometimes gathered in some parks to practice.

During their online activities, they used ZOOM and their PC cameras to do muscle training together. They also used ZOOM to have various meetings, and exercise effectively.

The club was not even allowed to gather in public parks to practice, even if they insisted that such a gathering was

not an official club activity. However, they also seemed to have their own reasoning. With tournaments coming up in a few months, it seemed unbearable for some universities not to resume club activities ahead of time. In fact, compared to other universities, Hokusei was slower in resuming club activities.

That said, Hokusei should be commended; Hokusei minimized coronavirus damage. From the second semester, face-to-face classes gradually increased, and although there were some restrictions, it became possible to use the facilities such as the circle building and the ground for club activities.

However, as the number of people infected with coronavirus in Sapporo increased again, the Hokkaido crisis level was raised to a higher Stage 3. Hokusei may return to the situation of the first semester, but it is necessary for students make the most

of previous 'lockdown' experiences and keep their club activities alive.

## FRESHMAN CLUB ACTIVITIES

As mentioned above, club activities were prohibited in the first semester. For that reason, the number of freshmen entering club activities was less than unusual.

However, the seniors who are doing club activities are desperately soliciting freshmen by using SNS such as LINE, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Perhaps it was worth it, because for the athletics club at least, it seemed that a considerable number of freshmen joined up, even though numbers were lower than usual.

It was a very happy thing, but it was only after the second semester began that freshmen were able to start participating in club practice properly. Every year, freshmen have been able to participate from the beginning of the first semester, so it was a very late start.

In addition, coronavirus still exists for a while, so there is a high possibility that this situation will occur next year as well. However, as mentioned earlier, this problem can be improved from next year because students can make use of their previous experiences.

## THE FACILITIES THAT CAN-

## NOT BE USED

Due to coronavirus, a lot of facilities in Hokusei were not able to be used. Among them, the circle building, the outdoor fields, the gymnasium, and the training room had a great influence on club activities. It was unavoidable because club activities were prohibited in the first place, but there might be cases where they could not get involved in any club activities because they could not go to get the equipment they needed in the club rooms.

However, despite the restrictions, if special permission is given, the circle building, the outdoor fields, and the gymnasium can be used. Then what is wrong?

The biggest problem is access to the weight training room. This is an extremely big problem. Many athletics activities at Hokusei have always used the training room. The current students can use it for free, and because it is adjacent to the classroom building, training can be done in the time between classes.

Despite this, no permission has been granted for use of the weight training room this year. According to the staff of the support section, permission will be given soon, but looking at the current situation, it will be tough again. It is a pity, but it cannot be helped. We must do our best to minimize the damage from coronavirus.

RYOSUKE KOSAKA



