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University Management in the Knowledge Society:

A Case Study of Kanazawa Institute of Technology

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This case study of Kanazawa Institute of Technology (KIT) aims to construct a stylized theoretical model of university management in the knowledge society and to make practical suggestions to universities.

The three perspectives of Knowledge Management (KM) , organizational theory, and strategic management theory were employed to analyze KIT's business-firm-like initiatives of organizational transformation.

This study set the major research question:

What is the ideal university management best suitable for the knowledge society?

and the following three subsidiary research questions:

- 1) Who has led the initiatives of organizational transformation?
- 2) What kinds of schemes for the initiatives were created and how?
- 3) How KIT's mission has affected the initiatives?

To answer these research questions, data was collected and analyzed through interviews with KIT's president, administrative chief, assistant section chief of academic affairs, and head of the learning counseling office, documents analysis of various brochures of KIT, and observation of such events as student

presentations of Yumekobo(i.e., Dream Works or student group projects)and the open campus of KIT.

The case analysis focused on two mini cases: Engineering Design Curriculum and Yumekobo. The major finding is that KIT has been a tight-coupling organization because it was an engineering school until the recent organizational transformation to a multi-school institution.

The answers to the subsidiary research questions are:

1) Dr. Ishikawa, president of KIT, created a clear vision derived from KIT's mission. A team led by Prof. Kubo developed the Engineering Design Curriculum to realize that vision. And Mr. Fukuda, administrative chief of KIT, built Yumekobo to support the Engineering Design Curriculum.

2) KIT' teaching and clerical staff have a lot of discussions. Almost all of reform ideas were proposed by the clerical staff. The mission and vision have led the discussion. Also, more than ten foreign members were invited to design the new curriculum and students were involved through questionnaire surveys.

3) Management of KIT fits the process of strategic decision making. KIT's legacy of founding spirit led to its mission, which in turn led to the vision. Many reform ideas were based on such a clear vision.

As for theoretical implications, a "tight coupling model" of university management was built. It shows that university management in which the organization can be tightly integrated by a vision that was created and presented by the leader. The following four enabling conditions are needed to strengthen the organization's "tight coupling." They are leadership, mission, vision, and knowledge-creating *ba*. The leader creates a vision which is based on the university's mission. The two conditions justify, direct, and facilitate knowledge creation.

As for practical implications, top management of the university should build strong leadership by showing his own vision and creating mechanisms that realize it, thereby tightening the organization.

Finally, future research into university management needs a perspective of strategic management and a comparative study of strategies of multiple universities.