With the advent of a growing global information age, our societies are undergoing profound economic, political, and socio-cultural changes both within and beyond national borders. Gender as a notion increases in its significance in this context of social change providing a perspective that allows us to address increasingly important issues such as various forms of inequality and oppression as well as fixed gender roles and to develop new ideas and concepts for creating a peaceful, happy society. It is our urgent task to work towards achievement of a harmonious society in which people and groups with diverse cultural backgrounds may respect differences among them. For this purpose, we apply our school’s flexible, future-oriented academic stance to promote a society where diversity is recognized.

Background
Meiji University is a pioneer in women’s higher education. This legacy can be traced back to 1929 when the university opened a women’s school and offered special courses on law and commerce for female students. Many alumnae became jurists including Japan’s first female lawyers and judges. This women’s school, later a women’s junior college, played a significant role to promote women’s participation in society. The junior college was closed down in March 2004 with its role completed, but its legacy was succeeded by the School of Information and Communication. Gender Center was founded at this new School in April 2010 to further explore gender issues and promote gender equality in the present and future. Since then the center’s activities expand and bring results.

Research Projects (Excerpt)
- Women in professional occupations
- Diversity management in organization
- Postwar women’s magazines and their impact on lifestyle
- Sexualization of male and female bodies in media
- Representation of couples in French and Japanese media

We at gender center conceptualize our activities to discuss issues related to social roles and cultural images of gender and sexuality. In doing so, we emphasize the importance of diversity as an ideal to achieve a society in which various ways of life are accepted and social recognition as a key for forming one’s identity.

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Key Concepts at Gender Center: Gender, Diversity, Social Recognition

**Gender**

- Gender refers to what makes of our sex culturally and socially, which cannot be determined solely by the biological notion of sex.
- Work-life-balance and the normalcy in Japanese employment
- A gender track today – care work, management, education

**Diversity**

- We see diversity as an important condition for our mutual support and harmonious coexistence. It is a touchstone issue for a today’s mature democracy how we cope with difficulties arising from differences regarding gender, sexuality, disability, culture, religion, ideology.
- An inclusive society for all with diverse backgrounds?
- Living together – shared housing, collective housing, group housing
- How is a society and an organization without any discrimination and exclusion possible?

**Recognition**

- Recognition refers to positive acceptance of others by judging them on the basis of mutually agreed norms. It can be achieved in various ways in contemporary societies – accepting others as those emotionally bounded, members of an equal, liberal society, or people who belong to the same value community.

**Topics of The Previous Events (Excerpt)**

- Seminar series: Work-life balance, promoting women and Japan’s economic revitalization (2012)
- Seminar series: Marriage and female employment in international comparison (2013)
- Special lecture: Decolonising gender – Understanding masculinities, femininities and gender relations on a world scale (2014)
- International interdisciplinary symposium: Knowledge construction through the lens of social and cultural diversity (2014)
- International symposium: Gender equality and diversity in research environment (2015)
- MEIJI ALLY WEEK (2015)
- Seminar series: Recovery from anorexia – From a perspective of clinical sociology (2016)
- Film screening and talk live: Documentary, Chizuru (2016)
- Freeheld (2016)
- Seminar series: Mainstream culture and LGBT (2016)