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**Abstract**

A number of different parties in Japan have been discussing higher educational reform for over thirty years. Many of these ideas finally started to take form in the 1990s as the Ministry of Education's University Council began implementing many of the propositions that had been put forth during the deliberations of the 1970s and 1980s. As Japan enters the 21st century, its 18-year-old population has decreased by over half a million since 1992. It will decrease another 300,000 by the year 2010. This has added an increased urgency to make reforms, especially at third-tier universities, which are now starting to have trouble recruiting students. Japan's Ministry of Education would also like to bring the quality of its university educational standards up to par with the rest of the advanced nations. Moreover, industry is demanding a new breed of employee - and one much different than the Japanese educational system has been known to produce. Finally, a new generation of Japanese is starting to reach adulthood, who - raised on consumerism, and material abundance - have a completely different value system than their parents' generation. This paper looks at the present higher

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education reform movement and its history extending back approximately thirty years. It then goes on to offer some suggestions as to what more can be done to alleviate many problems still inherent in the system. (HRK(Abtract übernommen) Paul Doyon, E-mail: doyon@alice.asahi-u.ac.jp)