



The Sophia University TV Center

No. 38

1. Opening of the TV Center

In April 1966, Sophia University opened the TV Center. With the creation of a studio for television production, a pioneering move among Japanese universities, the Department of Journalism within the Faculty of Humanities began serious research and education in television. This became the foundation for a program training professionals in the field of broadcasting as well as print journalism. The program started with a temporary studio fashioned from two classrooms on the fifth floor of Building No. 3. The equipment consisted of merely a few television monitors, video tapes, and video cameras. Three years later the TV Center was truly launched with facilities occupying 290 m² on the first floor and basement of Building No. 6 (105 m² of this space was used for the studio). Sophia appears to be the second Japanese university to have established a facility for producing television programs, following Nihon University, which in 1958 created a 264 m² studio for its broadcasting section.



Practice in broadcasting in the TV Center in Building No. 6 (1971)



Professor de Vera guiding students at the TV Center (1971)

The person who promoted the study of television at Sophia was Father Pedro

Arrupe, who served from 1958 to 1965 as the head of the Japan Province of the Society of

Jesus and from 1965 to 1983 as the twenty-eighth Superior General of the Society. Acting on his

recognition that television would become central to journalism, Father José M. de Vera, who had completed an M.A. in Theology at Sophia, entered the graduate program in mass media at the University of Michigan in the United States; he received his doctorate in that field in 1967. While in Tokyo to do research for his thesis on educational television in Japan, he took charge of setting up Sophia's TV Center.

In April 2013, Father de Vera, who presently resides in Spain, recalled in an e-mail message, "At that time there was hardly any other university with such a facility. A number of professors from other universities came to see the Sophia TV Center. Students were fascinated and were very eager to take the courses there."

From the latter part of the 1960s, with growing emphasis on education in television literacy, "Seminar in Broadcasting" and "Television Production" became required courses for Department of Journalism students. In 1966 the student newspaper *Jōchi shinbun* (also known as *The Sophia Times*) reported Father de Vera, then head of the TV Center, as saying, "Our aim is that through the actual production of programs, students will develop skills in communication, experience the joy of creating something, and, by working together with others, expand their capacity as human beings" (issue 12, 1 November 1966).



Studio in the second basement of Building No. 2

2. Restructuring to keep up with technological progress and the Internet age

When the TV Center moved to Building No. 6 in 1969, it was equipped with an up-to-date studio and control room. In response to the shift to digital transmission, the equipment was thoroughly revamped in 2002. With the completion of the new Building No. 2 in 2005, the TV Center moved to new quarters in the first and second basement. An open space connecting the

two floors makes it possible to view what is happening in the studio below from the control room one floor up. From 2009, in response to the digitalization of broadcasting, high definition equipment for recording and editing was introduced. At present the entire studio has been adapted for high definition digital broadcasting.

What is the TV Center's significance today? According to Professor Usui Hiroyoshi, who teaches "Television Production" and "Theory of Representation" in the Department of Journalism, "In today's digital age, when anyone can upload a video to YouTube or USTREAM, what is crucial is the content. 'To communicate through visual images,' one has to learn the grammar of that imagery. It is not a matter of just theoretical knowledge. One has to engage in hands-on practice of how best to communicate the abstract image in one's head" (May 2013). Illustrating this point, the TV Center is now used for courses in "Visual



Control room in the first basement of Building No. 2
(2006)

Education” offered for the museum curator certification program as well as for the Department of Journalism’s seminars and course in “Television Production.”

The sample class in “Television Production” held for Open Campus is always a popular event, and some students say that the experience led them to apply for the Department of Journalism. The TV Center also supports various campus activities by recording entrance and graduation ceremonies and public lectures, and by assisting with the preparation of materials to use in language classes.

3. Graduates’ career paths in mass communication and media

Nearly 40 percent of the graduates of the Department of Journalism pursue careers in media, such as newspapers, publishing, and advertising. According to “University Rankings, 2014” (Asahi Shimbun Shuppan, 2013), Sophia ranks fourth, after Keiō, Waseda, and Hōsei, as the alma mater of female announcers. In the words of Professor Usui, “Proportional to Sophia’s size, it has sent a large number of graduates into the world of broadcasting and mass media, and the TV Center has made a major contribution training those active in the broadcasting field.”



Producing a program in the studio in Building No. 2 (2005)