

JAPAN SOCIETY FOR BUSINESS ETHICS

1. Brief Description

Japan Society for Business Ethics (JABES) was founded in 1993 and, as of June 2020, there were 497 members consisting of academic researchers and business practitioners interested in business ethics. The aim of JABES is to promote and contribute to the sound development of business ethics studies and researches in Japan. JABES members have been conducting academic and practical research and improving its results through group study meetings, domestic and international exchange activities, symposiums and annual conferences for research presentation.

Besides business ethics study, with the growing interest in corporate social responsibility, corporate governance, sustainability, creating shared value (CSV), ESG (environmental, social and governance) investing and sustainable development goals (SDGs), JABES members have constructed diversified special interest groups (SIGs). As of June 2020, there were nine SIGs and two chapters (Kansai and Chubu) in JABES. As for publications, the Society publishes *Journal of Japan Society for Business Ethics* in March annually and JABES Newsletter three times a year. In March 2021, No.28 edition of *Journal of Japan Society for Business Ethics* will be published.

Since the foundation of the society, the following professors have served as the Society's presidents and have promoted the study of business ethics, devoting themselves to the academic achievements of JABES in Japanese academic society. Without the leadership, passion, and dedication of Dr. Masakazu MIZUTANI (1993-2008, Professor of Kanagawa University), Dr. Shunji KOBAYASHI (2008-2009, Professor of Waseda University), Dr. Hiroo TAKAHASHI (2009-2015, Professor of Hakuoh University), Dr. Mitsuhiro UMEZU (2015-2019, Associate Professor of Keio University), and Dr. Ayako Sendo (2019-, Professor of Takushoku University), JABES could not have grown to be such an academically active organization. Especially in 2019, when Dr. Ayako Sendo was elected by the Board of Directors as the first female president, JABES has further proved its true value of being a diverse, open, and ethical academic organization.

2. Research Activities and Publications of JABES

The main annual academic activities of JABES include a conference for research presentations held in June, three to four study meetings, a Business Ethics Symposium, and an inter-seminar for college students to present their CSR proposals.

Despite the 2020 annual conference being cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, JABES had held four annual conferences, four symposiums, fifteen research meetings and three special speeches from 2016 to September 2020.

In addition, nine SIGs, including Business Philosophy SIG, Corporate Behavior SIG, Organizational Governance SIG, Corporate Social Responsibility SIG, Business Ethics Education SIG, ESG investing and SDGs SIG, Law and Compliance SIG, and two chapters conduct their SIG research activities based on their own annual schedule.

(1) Annual Conference for Research Presentation (2016-2020)

JABES annual conference provides an opportunity for members to present their own research result, engage with the latest academic discussions, and enjoy the fellowship of other scholars and professionals in the field of business ethics. The Society holds an annual conference in which papers of latest research related to business ethics are presented and discussed. The papers presented in the annual conference are peer-reviewed before presentation by the Program Committee and after the annual conference the paper presenters are invited to publish their papers in the *Journal of Japan Society for Business Ethics*. The journal articles are in Japanese with a brief English abstract and they can be retrieved from CiNii (Citation information by National institute of informatics) after they are published.

The topics and themes discussed in 2016-2020 annual conferences are described as follows.

Table 1 2016-2020 annual conferences and unified themes

	Unified Theme	Host University
2016 Annual Conference (June 18-19)	Regional Revitalization and Business Ethics	Tohoku University
2017 Annual Conference (June 24-25)	The Past, Present and Future of Business Ethics	Keio University
2018 Annual Conference (June 23-24)	Sports and Business Ethics	Yamanashi Gakuin University
2019 Annual Conference (June 22-23)	AI and Business Ethics	Tokyo Institute of Technology
2020 Annual Conference (June 20-21) (cancelled due to COVID-19)	Foreign Workers and Business Ethics	Tokoha University

The 2016 annual conference was held at Tohoku University for two days from June 18 to 19 with a unified theme, “Regional Revitalization and Business Ethic”. The 2017 annual conference was held at Keio University for two days from June 24 to 25 with a unified theme, “The Past, Present and Future of Business Ethics”. The 2018 annual conference was held at Yamanashi Gakuin University for two days from June 22 to 23 with a unified theme, “Sports and Business Ethics”. The 2019 annual conference was held at Tokyo Institute of Technology for two days from June 22 to 23 with a unified theme, “AI and Business Ethics”. The 2020 annual conference was scheduled to be held at Tokoha University for two days from June 20 to 21 with a unified theme, “Foreign Workers and Business Ethics” but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Tokoha University will remain to host 2021 annual conference.

(2) Business Ethics Symposiums (2016-2020)

Business Ethics Symposiums, scheduled to be held once each in 2016, 2018, 2019 and 2020, had covered the topics of “Chinese Business and Business Ethics”, “The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Business Ethic”, “ESG Investing and its Prospects in Japan ”, and “Business Ethics and Corporate Governance”. However, the 11th Business Ethics Symposium scheduled on Feb. 28, 2020 had been cancelled due to the influence of COVID-19. Table 2 shows the topics of the 2016-2020 Business Ethics Symposiums.

Table 2 2016-2020 Business Ethics Symposiums

	Topic	Host University
8 th Business Ethics Symposium (March 24,2016)	Chinese Business and Business Ethics after the New Normalization	Takushoku University
9 th Business Ethics Symposium (Jan.18, 2018)	The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Business Ethics as Universal Languages	Keio University
10 th Business Ethics Symposium (Jan.30, 2019)	ESG Investing and its Prospects in Japan	Aoyama University
11 th Business Ethics Symposium (Feb.28, 2020) (cancelled due to COVID-19)	Business Ethics and Corporate Governance: Promoting Gender Equality	Takushoku University

(3) Research Meetings and Special Speeches (2016-2020)

Fifteen meetings for research presentation and discussion were held from April, 2016 to September, 2020 and they covered a wide array of topics such as (1)Volkswagen Emissions Fraud: the Limits of German Family Corporate Governance,(2)Ethics Education in Colleges and the Continuity to Learn Business Ethics, (3)Social Benefits of Ethics, (4)Improving Local Preparedness through CSR Activities, (5)Reports on Participation in the 2017-2019 Annual Conference of Society for Business Ethics (USA), (6)Conscience-Based Corporate Governance and the Limits of Corporate Governance Reform, (7)The Development of Gender Equality in the Male-Dominated Workplace, (8)Prohibition and Lifting of Interest in the History of Christianity: from Usury to Interest, (9)Institutional Connection and Synchronized Business Model, (10)Nestle's CSV and Business Ethics, (11)Foreign Workers and Business Ethics: A Comparative Study of Korea and Japan, (12) Corporate Governance and Corporate Power Holders, (13)Risk Management and Corporate Disaster Reduction, (14)Online Risk Management from PR Perspective, (15)Stakeholder Engagement and Regional Revitalization.

In addition, three special speeches titled "History of Business Ethics Study in Germany(by Dr. Christoph Lütge of Technische Universität München in Oct., 2016)", "The Future of Japanese Society and Labor Market Reform (by House of Representatives member, Mrs. Seiko Noda in Nov., 2016)" and "Corporate Philosophy and CSR of Saraya(by the president of Saraya Co.,Ltd., Mr. Yusuke Saraya in March, 2017)" were conducted by our guest speakers.

(4) Publications

The Society's official article is called *Journal of Japan Society for Business Ethics*. The contents include presentation papers in our annual conference and two to three call-for-papers which are peer-viewed and selected by the editor committee. In addition to *Journal of Japan Society for Business Ethics*, the Society also publishes newsletters three times a year. The JABES Newsletter informs members of its latest activities and gives summaries of research meetings and special speeches. Most of the members receive a newsletter through digital channels which not only saves mailing cost for JABES office but also promptly provides members of necessary information. Both *Journal of Japan Society for Business Ethics* and the JABES Newsletter are mainly written in Japanese and it is our next step to globalize our publications to attract English readers. Figure 1 is the picture of *Journal of Japan Society for Business Ethics* and the JABES Newsletter published in March 2020.

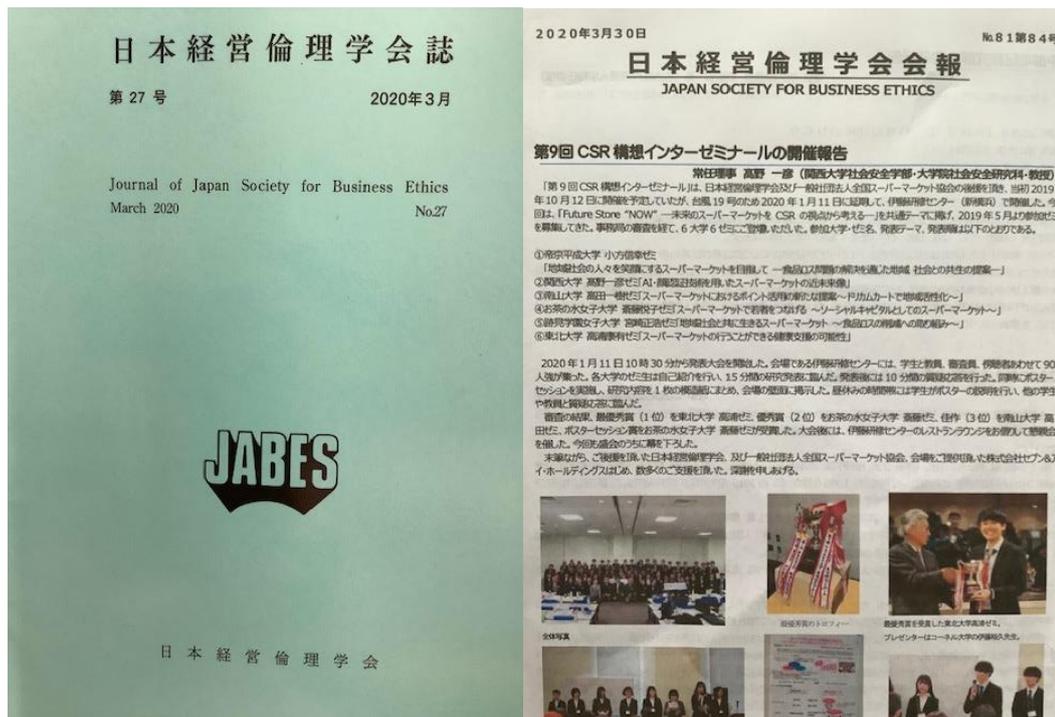


Figure 1 JABES publications

3. CSR Inter-Seminars for College Students (2016-2020)

CSR inter-seminar is a presentation competition event among university seminars. The Society's former president Dr. Umetsu had committed to fostering young scholars and college students and raising the level of research in the Society throughout his term of 2015-2019. CSR inter-seminar is designed for college students who are studying or conducting research on Business Ethics and CSR related topics. Those students, especially those who belong to CSR seminars (zemi) in their universities, are invited and encouraged to present their ideas and proposals to solve social and environmental issues in this CSR inter-seminar. Every year, there were seven to eight college seminars participating in this inter-seminar event and students had enjoyed the CSR proposal competition and exchange activities.

Through this CSR inter-seminar event, students not only learn to find the possible solutions for CSR or business ethics issues, but also are stimulated to continue their advanced study in graduate schools and become emerging scholars in the near future. The winners of the inter-seminar will be introduced in the Society's newsletter, and all members will share the growth and success of the young generation and be stimulated to enhance business ethics study.

4. Alliance with Other Organizations

The Society has been dedicating in joint activities and symposiums with other organizations. For example, the 9th Business Ethics Symposium (theme: SDGs) was held jointly with Business Ethics Research Center (BERC) and with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The 10th Business Ethics Symposium (theme: ESG Investing) was held with the support of BERC, the Association of Certified Business Ethics Experts JAPAN (ACBEE), and various private sectors. This kind of alliance events help JABES members reach out to different organizations and cultivate various perspectives toward business ethics study. Also, since the first president Dr. Mizutani founded JABES, BERC and ACBEE, strategic alliance among the three organizations brings positive and synergic impact to JABES members.

5. International Exchange Activities

Some JABES members are members of the Society for Business Ethics (USA) and they attend its annual conference in August. From 2017 to 2019, members who attended and presented at the Society for Business Ethics annual conference had reported their experiences in the United States and what they had learned in the annual conferences. These international academic experiences motivate emerging scholars and graduate students. However, it is also important to provide opportunities for all members to experience international exchange activities.

In March 2021, the Society is planning to hold an international joint Business Ethics Symposium with Chinese Culture University in Taiwan. This will be the second Japan-Taiwan joint Business Ethics Symposium since 2010 and JABES members are looking forward to this international exchange. Though the influence of COVID-19 should be considered, it is JABES's goal to become more academically global. Since our first Japan-Taiwan joint Business Ethics Symposium held in Taipei in 2010, more papers and academic articles related to business ethics and CSR in Taiwan have been published. We sincerely hope the second Japan-Taiwan joint Business Ethics Symposium will be equally successful.

6. JABES's Mission and Prospect: To Further Promote Business Ethics Study

Due to the increasing number of corporate scandals and failed corporate governance issues in Japan, the Society regards promoting business ethics to all sectors as our mission. Dr. Sendo, JABES president since 2019, declared to focus on the following aspects of academic activities.

Firstly, the Society would like to increase the number of opportunities for

members to communicate and present their research findings. At the 2020 Annual General Meeting held in June 2020, members of the Society decided to publish a new journal titled *Sustainability Studies in Business* starting in 2021. This new journal will provide another opportunity for members to present their research results and discuss diversified topics related to sustainability. Secondly, the Society would like to plan and implement activities for members to visit and observe Japanese companies which are operating their business activities according to business ethics. Thirdly, the Society would like to further promote research exchange with overseas researchers in the field of business ethics. After the Japan-Taiwan joint Business Ethics Symposium is held in Taipei in March of 2021, The Society plans to hold a Japan-Thailand joint Business Ethics Symposium in the following year.

We are now in an era that the wisdom and the creativity of each of us as scholars, managers, workers, shareholders and stakeholders are being tested. Do we choose to act ethically or not? As an academic society in the field of business ethics, the members and stakeholders of JABES will continue to consider what we can and should do for Japan and the world.