

On the path to becoming a world-class university

Building a world-class education and research institution through international exchange

14th IACIS Conference in Sendai

The 14th conference of the International Association of Colloid and Interface Scientists (IACIS) was held in Sendai on May 13, 2012. The IACIS conference is one of the largest international conferences on colloid and interface science and is held every three years. The Science Council of Japan and the Chemical Society of Japan organized the Sendai conference, and Tohoku University provided assistance. The opening ceremony and reception were graced with the presence of the Emperor and Empress. About 1,000 researchers from around the world attended the conference to discuss the latest research results in the field of nanomaterials. Before and after the conference, several researchers visited Tohoku University and discussed with university officials industry-university and inter-university collaboration.



The Emperor and Empress at the opening ceremony (photo courtesy of the PR Division of Miyagi Prefectural Government)

Joining forces with international consortiums of universities

Tohoku University is actively involved with international consortiums of prominent universities as part of its continuing efforts to become a world-class education and research institution.

The University has been one of 17 members of the Association of East Asian Research Universities (AEARU) since 1998, and has been on its seven-member board since December 2011. Tohoku University President Susumu Satomi attended the 30th AEARU board meeting at Nanjing University in China on May 20, 2012, and discussed a wide range of issues with other university presidents.

The University has also been a member of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) since 2008. This association, which has 42 member universities from 16 countries and regions in the Pacific Rim, facilitates joint educational and research efforts to address key socioeconomic issues affecting the Pacific Rim. The University of Oregon in the United States hosted the 16th APRU Annual Presidents Meeting on June 28 and 29, 2012, in which 100 officials from 34 member institutions, including 23 university presidents, participated. At the meeting, President Satomi talked about how Tohoku University was assisting with the reconstruction efforts for communities and industries affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake.

30th AEARU board meeting



16th APRU Annual Presidents Meeting



University presidents attending the meeting



President Satomi giving a presentation

Future Global Leadership Program offering bachelor's degree courses to international students

With a subsidy from MEXT's Project for Establishing Network for Internationalization, Tohoku University is running the Future Global Leadership (FGL) program to attract talented students from abroad by expanding the offerings of degree courses taught in English and providing international students with a comfortable environment for studying and living in Japan.

The University has been adding new degree courses in which faculty members teach classes in English and provide study support to international students. In the 2011 academic year, seven such courses were added, including undergraduate courses in engineering, science, and agriculture.

In the 2012 academic year, the University will be offering all the 16 courses originally planned for the FGL program. We will continue to enhance these courses and to improve accommodation for international students in an effort to become an education and research institution that embraces global perspective.



Students and tutors in an undergraduate course taught in English

Alumni associations in South Korea and China

Tohoku University has alumni associations in China, Indonesia, South Korea, and Taiwan. The South Korean alumni association held its general meeting in Seoul on November 5, 2011, and the Chinese association held its meeting in Beijing on January 8, 2012.

The then President Akihisa Inoue and faculty members attended both meetings to strengthen relationships between the University and South Korean and Chinese alumni by updating them on the University's reconstruction projects for communities and industries affected by the March 2011 earthquake and on the University's latest research projects.



Participants in the alumni association's meeting in China



The then President Inoue delivering a speech at the alumni meeting in China

3rd Japanese-Russian Forum of Rectors in Sendai

Tohoku University hosted the 3rd Japanese-Russian Forum of Rectors on March 19 and 20, 2012. This forum was organized by the executive committee chaired the then President Akihisa Inoue, the Japan-Russia Society, and Moscow State University. Thirty-three institutions participated in the forum from both countries.

The opening ceremony featured speeches by the then President Akihisa Inoue, Moscow State University President Victor Sadovnichy; Kunio Hatoyama, a member of the House of Representatives and chairman of the Japan-Russia Society (speech read by Yasuji Kaoru, executive member of the society, on his behalf); Yasuki Matsuo, director of the Student Support and Exchange Division of MEXT; and Konstantin Vinogradov, first secretary at the Russian Embassy. Presentations by university presidents were followed by a session to discuss the globalization of university education and the development of human resources with global perspectives.

At the conclusion of the forum, President Inoue and President Sadovnichy signed a communiqué on behalf of their respective countries. The communiqué stated that the forum participants agreed to: (1) collaborate to develop human resources capable of playing a role in a global arena; (2) address global issues facing higher education; (3) conduct joint research to pursue innovation; (4) conduct joint research on disaster science to reduce disaster risks; (5) share information about joint research projects between Japan and Russia; (6) hold a Japanese-Russian forum on medicine and human science at Moscow State University in autumn 2012; and (7) hold the 4th Japanese-Russian Forum of Rectors at Moscow State University in 2013.



3rd Japanese-Russian Forum of Rectors



The then President Inoue (right) and Moscow State University President Sadovnichy (left)

Short-Term Study Abroad Program

Three groups of Tohoku University students, 83 in total, studied at the University of California at Riverside in the United States and at the University of Sydney in Australia under the short-term Study Abroad Program in September 2011 and in February and March 2012. This program provides students with an opportunity during long vacations to take four- to five-week intensive English classes and audit classes in their majors at overseas universities with which Tohoku University has signed academic exchange agreements. UC Riverside offers classes that focus on improving students' English proficiency and multicultural awareness, and the University of Sydney focuses on improving students' English skills for academic purposes. Students participating in the program stay with host families to get a taste of daily life and culture of the host countries.

Tohoku University launched the Study Abroad Program in 2007, when the first group of students studied at the University of Sydney, and has since been upgrading the program to attract more students. Starting the 2011 academic year, students who complete the program earn credits for a liberal arts course.



Students on the Study Abroad Program