

The Challenge of Becoming a World-Class University

Ever since Tohoku University was established in 1907, our philosophy has always been to put “*Research First*” and maintain an “*Open-Door*” policy for emphasizing a “*Practice-Oriented Research and Education*.” Over the years, this has enabled us to offer our students a world-class education and for them to carry out world-class research. Moreover, the results of our research have proven useful in solving many problems facing society, and by educating leaders; we have contributed in establishing a just and peaceful society. Our university’s history has been built through diligent accomplishments and efforts of those who have passed through the halls of our campuses and facilities during ten decades of education. The alumni, the educators, administrating staff and the supporting community have all taken part in the development of our unique institution which marks its centenary that we so proudly celebrate this year.



Humanity today is facing a variety of difficult and complex challenges which need to be addressed on a global basis. By applying the knowledge we have accumulated over the past century, and by continuing our efforts to achieve innovation in the fields of research and education, our university is determined to play a leading role in helping humanity overcome various challenges that it faces today. It is with this desire to contribute our share in the progress and development of human society which drives our efforts to become a truly “world-class university.”

Resolved to become a world-class university and capable of playing a leading role, solving the problems facing humanity; we have come to realize that in trying to direct the future course of development, Tohoku University should revolve its efforts around three key words: “*Challenge*,” “*Creation*,” and “*Innovation*.” At its core, there must be a spirit of “*Challenge*” which will motivate us to achieve a level of excellence required to build the society of the future.

As a “*transmitter of knowledge*,” Tohoku University aims to serve society by training large numbers of graduates equipped with indomitable spirit and by developing human resources capable of playing leading roles in various fields on the international stage.

Furthermore, as a “*creator of knowledge*,” our goal will use the energies generated by our spirit of challenge to create a world-class knowledge and contribute to the progress of human society by employing practical applications of this knowledge. We will promote interdisciplinary research with a transdisciplinary emphasis in an effort to find innovative solutions to problems in the areas of environment, energy, food, life sciences, and social welfare.

As an “*enterprise of knowledge*” which welcomes input from both inside and outside the university, we are able to develop strategies to accomplish our goals. By taking advantage of the best minds available, from both within the university and those beyond its walls, and by fully exploiting the capacities we have developed over the years, I am fully convinced that we will be able to open the way to a very bright future for ourselves as an absolute world-class research-intensive university.

In March we formulated an action plan which Tohoku University started for FY 2007 and entitled it as “Inoue Plan 2007.” With unwavering commitments for the betterment of humanity, the plan represents the university’s strategies and action plans through five principle pillars: research, education, social contribution, campus environment, organization and management. The five pillars set our visions in becoming a World-Class University and currently and for this reason take on a wide range of new challenges for this goal. One of our challenges is the establishment of a “Tohoku University International Advanced Research and Education Organization,” which aims to nurture prominent researchers who, possess outstanding knowledge and creative comprehensive intelligence and, will be the leaders in the 21st academia. Based upon the achievements of our thirteen “21st COE Program,” covering the natural sciences, the humanities, and to social sciences fields; we foster the young and talented students with a number of diversified inter-department curriculums. We also activate and implement an “Overseas Internship Programs” with outstanding overseas institutions for fostering students’ international awareness. Besides the above mentioned programs, our efforts are rich in originality and we presently conduct the following activities: establishment of a World Premier International Research Center, leading the creation of new business frontiers in collaboration with industry-academia-government, development of a campus in high global standard which is open to the world, and establishment of a “Tohoku University Personnel System” for support of international competitiveness.

To become a top university is not something which can be accomplished overnight. We must never lose sight of the fact that universities today are facing a very rapidly changing, and extremely competitive environment. However, by making clear the steps which we need to take and by combining the abilities and talents of our remarkable faculty, students and alumni, we will be able to manage Tohoku University in a fashion which will allow all of our stakeholders to realize their full potential and move us ever closer to our goal. Addition to that, widely working together with people in society, we intend to address a great number of challenging issues on humanities. That is the mission of Tohoku University to fulfill.

We will share with you our vision of the future mission and direction of Tohoku University, and with your help I am convinced that we will become a university which is trusted, respected and loved by the surrounding community, one which will contribute significantly in the advancement and prosperity of the mankind.

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