Message from the President



Introduction

This year marks the 115th anniversary of Tohoku University's founding, and 100 years since the Faculty of Law and Letters was established on campus. This addition to the Faculties of Science, Medicine and Engineering in 1922, officially made us a comprehensive university with courses in social science and humanities.

These days, Tohoku University is home to 18,000 students across 10 faculties, 15 graduate schools and six research institutes. About 10 percent of our students come from abroad, contributing to one of the most cosmopolitan academic environments in Japan.

Our diverse student population and research achievements, coupled with our wide network of collaborative partners, led to us being one of the first three institutions to be conferred the status of a Designated National University by the Japanese government in June 2017.

And in 2022 - for the third year in a row - Times Higher Education ranked Tohoku University number one on its annual list of Japanese universities, highlighting our learning environment, international outlook, and research citation and influence.

Through it all, Tohoku University has held true to our three guiding principles - a "Research First" tradition, an "Open-door" policy and a commitment to the spirit of "Practice-oriented Research and Education."

Our Research First Tradition

This has its origins at the university's inaugural entrance ceremony, when then-president Masataro Sawayanagi pledged that Tohoku University "would never be surpassed in the realm of research."

Over the years our world-class laboratories have produced lifestyle-changing innovations, such as the split-anode magnetron used in microwave ovens and the steel-wire recorder. We made our first foray into the wireless world with the Yagi-Uda antenna, and continue to be at the forefront of digital transformation technology today.

By taking an interdisciplinary approach to research, we have also developed new academic fields, such as disaster science and next-generation medicine.

Our Open-door Policy

From our founding, Tohoku University has welcomed students from all backgrounds, including graduates from both technical and regular high schools. Our "Open-door" policy reflects the value we place on diversity and inclusion in higher education.

In August 1913, the admission of three female students to Tohoku Imperial University - the forerunner of Tohoku University - was announced in the official gazette. That moment broke the gender barrier in Japanese academia, marking the first time in the country's history, that female students were accepted into a university.

While gender equality and the promotion of diversity have always been important goals, the launch of the Tohoku University Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Declaration this past April is a reiteration of our commitment towards promoting respect for all, and encouraging the participation of different voices at all levels of our university community – from leadership through faculty and our student body.

Our Spirit of Practice-oriented Research and Education

Understanding the social responsibilities that come with being a top research university, we are driven to find solutions to global and social problems, such as natural disasters, pandemics and geopolitical changes.

In the aftermath of the 2011 Great East Japan earthquake, Tohoku University has been involved in more than 100 projects that have contributed to the recovery and reconstruction of Japan's devastated Northeast region.

To address resilience and sustainability on a more global scale, we introduced a Green Goals Initiative in July 2021, and are working towards carbon neutrality on campus by 2040. Under the initiative, we will further develop green technology, engage in joint green research, promote SDGs research, and foster industry-academia-government collaboration and social co-creation.

Our Community and Global Engagement

While Tohoku University takes on various roles as a research university, our ultimate mission is to contribute to the public good and people's well-being. Since the global onset of COVID-19, Tohoku University Hospital has simultaneously served as the focus of the community's medical care, as well as its vaccination efforts through the establishment of the Tohoku University Vaccination Center.

We are in the process of diversifying our resources as part of our governance reform. By obtaining third-party funding and creating unique investment opportunities, we plan to further improve our campus environment by developing an international research and development hub to attract the best talent from around the world.

The new extension of the Aobayama Campus is an example of these strategic efforts. The self-financed construction and maintenance is an unprecedented project for a national university.

The state-of-the-art campus extension now houses the Graduate School of Agricultural Science, Graduate School of Environmental Studies, International Research Institute of Disaster Science, and the Center for Innovative Integrated Electronic Systems.

In 2023, the highly anticipated next-generation synchrotron radiation facility will be operational there. Nicknamed "NanoTerasu," the facility is expected to be the centerpiece of a research complex that will comprise the R&D sites of major universities and companies from around the world.

In tandem, the Tohoku University Science Park will open, and serve as a nexus for fostering joint industry-university collaboration, and a problem-solving platform for the world.

Conclusion

In the following pages of this Fact Book, you will find detailed information about Tohoku University's academic activities, research and community engagements. I would also recommend our official website (https://www.tohoku.ac.jp/en/) as a resource for the latest news on the university's activities.

Tohoku University's enduring relationships with its community, partner organizations, local and national governments, and alumni around the world, are big reasons for our success these last 115 years.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to your continued support.

Hideo Ohno
President, Tohoku University
August 2022