

OSAKA UNIVERSITY, LIVE LOCALLY AND GROW GLOBALLY

Hideo Miyahara, President, Osaka University

It is a pleasure for me to be here today and have the opportunity to speak about Osaka University's global commitment, international policies and aspirations. I would also like to introduce you to some of the initiatives and undertakings of Osaka University that are international in nature and in perspective. I hope my talk will provide an opportunity for guests and colleagues both from the Netherlands and Japan to share ideas and exchange opinions.

Overview of Osaka University and our Commitment to International Exchange

Osaka University is committed to contributing to global society through the upholding of its motto, "Live Locally, Grow Globally." It prides itself in successfully conducting research and educating the next generation of scholars in a multitude of disciplines ranging from humanities, social sciences, medicine, dentistry and pharmaceutical science, to life and engineering sciences. At present, we have 10 Schools with corresponding Graduate Schools, five independent Graduate Schools, five research institutes, two university hospitals, three libraries, and 19 joint-use facilities in the three campuses of Toyonaka, Suita and Nakanoshima. There are about 20,000 students, among whom approximately 1,000 are international students, and 2,500 faculty members.

At present, about 1,000 international students study at Osaka University. 80% of them are graduate students, and 80% come from Asia. We have 76 students from Europe, among whom nine come from the Netherlands.

Our educational goals of "critical thinking, imagination and transcultural communicability" are intended to cultivate such qualities in students so they become citizens with a global outlook and with the ability to communicate in multicultural settings. The internationalization of our university is considered an important step towards achieving such goals.

We have set up the International Affairs Board, headed by a Trustee, along with the Research Promotion Board and the Education and Information Board at its headquarters. The International Affairs Board issued a policy paper entitled "Osaka University's Global Commitment and Strategies" in December 2005. We thus renewed our commitment in promoting the exchange of students and scholars and reaffirmed our mission to remain a world-class institution of research and higher education. We value openness and global

appeal of our university to make it a hub for scholarly exchange where people and ideas come together from all over the world.

Osaka University's International Strategies and the Establishment of Three Overseas Centers for Education and Research

Osaka University has three global goals. They are:

1. To promote research collaboration with scholars and institutions overseas and share the results for the benefit of the global society;
2. To promote education that fosters transcultural communicability and encourages constructive and creative action;
3. To build regional academic communities in Asia and work for human security and sustainable development.

One of the key strategies to achieve these goals is the establishment of three overseas centers for education and research. The San Francisco Center, which covers North America, was set up in April 2004, and we held the opening ceremony and the commemorative symposium in September the same year. As you already know, our second overseas center is in Europe and was established in the University of Groningen. It was October last year that we successfully held the opening and a collaborative symposium with the University of Groningen. The most recent addition is the Bangkok Center established in March this year. We are planning to have its official opening and the inaugural symposium later this month.

One of the mandates of the overseas centers is to create scholarly networks for each region and to further promote research collaboration and educational exchange that are conducive to achieving our global goals. I would like to take this opportunity to mention a few words about our close ties with Groningen University on the occasion of this joint symposium. It is my sincere hope that our partnership will be further enhanced through productive research collaboration and exchange of scholars and students. I also hope that our partnership will continue to be mutually beneficial and serve as a channel for proactive exchange between Osaka University and European counterparts as well as Groningen University and Asian counterparts.

Examples of Osaka University's International Research and Educational Programs

I wish now to introduce you to some of the examples of international initiatives and programs implemented by different schools and institutes within Osaka University.

School of Engineering Science

The Graduate School of Engineering Science is among the leaders in promoting international exchange through various research cooperation, international education and student exchange programs. It successfully carries out an inter-university exchange program with the Materials Science Center of the University of Groningen and the University of Paris, just to cite two examples. In addition, it offers many student exchange programs with universities in Europe, the United States, and Asia.

Institute of Scientific and Industrial Research

The Institute of Scientific and Industrial Research (ISIR), which is the largest research institute in Osaka University, promotes research collaboration and training for young scholars through actively participating in global research and training networks in the field of computational nano-materials design, with grants from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. Partner institutes in Europe include IFF and FZ-Julich in Germany, CNRS in France, and Daresbury Laboratory in the UK. On our side, the Schools of Science, Engineering and Engineering Science are involved. The ISIR functions as a leading institute among Japanese universities in enhancing such global networks by promoting the exchange of researchers, organizing international symposiums and workshops, and by extending the scope of joint research with partners in Asia as well as the United States.

School of Information Science and Technology

To train the next generation of information scientists of international caliber, the Graduate School of Information Science and Technology launched an integrated graduate education program titled "PRIUS" (Pacific Rim International University) in 2005. The PRIUS program offers a number of international educational and research opportunities to graduate students at various stages of their academic career. At master's level, a series of lectures are given by distinguished guest scholars from overseas universities and scientific institutions to stimulate students' interest in the global scientific front. Short and long-term internship programs that follow at master's and doctorate levels enable on-the-job training overseas, while a more research-oriented exchange scheme is available for upper doctorate and post-doctoral scholars.

UNESCO International Post-Graduate University Course in Microbiology

The 'UNESCO Post-Graduate Course in Microbiology' offers a graduate education program to Asian students at leading Japanese universities such as ours here at Osaka University, Tohoku University, Tokyo University, Kyoto University and Kyushu University. This

program was launched in 1973, and to date over 400 students have completed the course. In recent years, the program is conducted both in Thailand and Japan, making it truly 'international' in nature and in spirit. I had the pleasure of attending the closing ceremony held at Osaka University recently.

Strategic Initiative in the Pacific Rim (APRU and the Research Institute for Microbial Diseases)

The Pacific Rim is an area prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunami and volcanic eruptions. Osaka University is an active member of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU), a consortium of 37 leading research universities of the region. In April, we jointly organized a symposium on earthquake research with the University of California, Berkeley in San Francisco. It specifically focused on ways of reducing the environmental impact of earthquakes and on how to strengthen ties among universities in the Pacific Ocean's earthquake-prone area.

I wish to cite another example of Osaka University's strategic move in the region. It is research on infectious diseases such as SARS, and I do not need to reiterate its increased importance. In December 2005, the Research Institute for Microbial Diseases, Osaka University, established the Research Collaboration Center on Emerging and Re-emerging Infections in Bangkok, Thailand with funding from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. At the moment, about 15 staff members, including eight researchers from Osaka, engage in fundamental and applicable research to prevent and control infectious diseases such as avian flu and AIDS. While the center is still in the very first phase of operation, it aims to expand its activities to involve neighboring countries.

Osaka University Forum

Osaka University organizes an annual symposium titled 'Osaka University Forum' at various renowned academic venues around the world. In the past, the forum has focused on specific themes. The first Forum was held in Washington DC on life sciences, the second in Germany on nano sciences, the third in Switzerland on biology and information sciences, the fourth in France on humanities, and the fifth in Vietnam on basic science. The 6th Forum, to be held in December in San Diego, will focus on biomedical research by bringing together world-class researchers both from Osaka University and American partner institutions.

The Promotion of Student Exchange

I wish to introduce you to some of the educational exchange programs and initiatives of

Osaka University.

OUSSEP

The Osaka University Short-Term Students Exchange Program (OUSSEP) offers one-year English language courses for short-term exchange students from our partner universities around the globe including the University of Groningen. It is a university-wide program coordinated by the International Student Center. This year, we introduced new courses and measures to meet demands from our partners such as creating a Japanese language learners' course and research oriented study programs as well as accepting one semester enrollment. We look forward to welcoming more students from Groningen University in this renewed exchange program.

Short-term Study Abroad Programs

For students who aspire to study abroad, we offer a number of short-term programs and opportunities. For example, the School of Engineering offers a summer course to improve students' English language communication skills in places such as the University of California and the University of Washington. Likewise, the School of Law sends their students to the University of California, the University of British Columbia and other universities, for a training course that includes a model court participation. I am very pleased to inform you that this year we successfully launched a new summer program at Groningen University in which about 20 students from the Schools of Letters, Law and Economics participated. It was well received by the students and faculty alike. We thank the University of Groningen for their cooperation and support of the program.

Services for International Scholars and Students

To improve the services for international students and scholars is a priority for Osaka University as the university expects an increased number of international guests, researchers and students arriving in Osaka each year.

GCN-Osaka

Global Campus Net Osaka, commonly known as GCN-Osaka, is a community website for international students and scholars at Osaka University. It provides information on visas, housing, scholarships, health and medical care, and career opportunities as well as on-line Japanese language courses. We will also utilize the website for services to our alumni overseas in the future.

We plan to establish a support office for international students and scholars and learned a great deal from the well-established International Service Desk at the University of

Groningen. We are very grateful to Dr. Madeleine Gardeur, Director of International Relations, who visited our university in March for sharing her expertise.

Openness and Global Appeal

Osaka University considers its openness and global appeal very important to attract researchers and students from all over the world. It is our goal to create a university open to the global community so students and scholars come together, study together, stimulate each other, to further upgrade the level of research and education. I believe such contribution is a basic mission for an institution of higher education today. I also believe that the close collaboration between the University of Groningen and Osaka University is conducive to the continuing success of Osaka University's international schemes and aspirations.