

Development of International Collaboration by University Research Administrators

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The current situation of research capability of Japanese universities is relatively declining, and they are no longer the best in Asia. The government has recognized this declining situation and recently has set a goal of regaining the leading position in the world. Arising from such situation, a consortium of universities and research institutes addressing the strengthening of research capabilities has formed the Research University Consortium (RUC) in 2017. These institutions employ university research administrators URA to improve their research capabilities. The RUC consists of the directors/vice presidents from 36 universities, and is currently discussing common issues and sharing best practices through its website, symposiums, and four task forces of experts. In particular, the promotion of international collaborative research is important for strengthening Japan's research capabilities. In this session, we gather the summary of URA activities in Japan, and good examples of how URA is contributing to the promotion of international collaborative research in the four universities presented here: Kyoto University, Okayama University, Kyushu University, and Kumamoto University.

Authors' Bio: Professor Amane Koizumi currently works for National Institutes of Natural Sciences, Japan, since 2013, the headquarter of five national research institutes including astronomy, fusion physics, basic biology, neuroscience/physiology, and molecular science. In his current role, he is managing/overseeing research activities of their research institutes. Koizumi is a graduate of Keio University School of Medicine, Tokyo, Japan (1997). After he got a Japanese medical doctor license, Koizumi became a PhD for retinal neurophysiology in Keio University. Koizumi was also a research fellow of Professor Richard H. Masland, Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School (2002-2007), Boston, USA.

Dr. Shinichi Yamamoto is Trustee and First Vice-President of Toyohashi University of Technology (TUT) since 2020. He became Trustee and Vice-President (Research and International Affairs) of Nagoya University in 2004 after served as Dean of the Graduate School of Bioagricultural Sciences, 2002-4. He was also First Vice-President of the Asian Association of Agricultural Colleges and Universities, 2002-4. After Nagoya University, he moved to Okayama University as Trustee and Vice-President (Research and Academia-Industry Collaboration). After Okayama University, he joined to NIAD-QE and managed in the University Evaluation. Yamamoto's academic background is in forest and tree ecology as well as university management, and he was, among other awards, awarded by the Japanese Forestry Society in 2000.

Dr. Taro Sonobe is Research Administrator and Sub-leader of International Group at Kyoto University Research Administration office. Currently, he is also a member of Provost-Office and International Strategy Office at Kyoto University. He has served as Deputy-Directors for Kyoto University ASEAN Center in Bangkok, Thailand as well as Kyoto University European Center in Heidelberg, Germany. During 2008 – 2012, he served as Global COE Assistant Professor at Graduate School of Energy Science of Kyoto University. He received his Ph. D. in Energy Technology from the Joint Graduate School of Energy and Environment, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Thailand in 2007.

Dr. Emi Uneyama is a chief University Research Administrator (URA) at Okayama University, Japan. She was graduated from School of Science, Kwansai Gakuin University, Japan and obtained her Ph.D. in organic chemistry from University of Leicester, UK. After 5 years of research experience at a Japanese chemical company and a university, she joined Okayama University and has worked as a URA since 2012. In 2020, she was assigned to a director, the Office of Research Promotion at the Organization for Research Strategy and Development, Okayama University. She is responsible for strategy to enhance research capability and strengthen the international collaboration, funding and research support for researchers.

Dr. Harold Kusters is Head of Grant Support Office at Kyushu University in Japan. He supervises the applications for research funding, assists researchers from all the faculties at the university to apply to research funding from the Japanese Government and foreign grants. Harold assisted in setting up a risk management system for international collaboration and has experience in industrial alliance under the so-called "comprehensive collaboration" system of Kyushu University. He is currently also contributing editor for NCURA Magazine. Harold studied Japanese Studies at Leiden University and completed his PhD in Linguistics and Language Education in 2004 at Hiroshima University.

Dr. Kazuki Takashima received his B.Eng. degree in metallurgy from Kumamoto University, Japan in 1978, and his M.Eng. and Ph.D. degrees in metallurgy from the Tokyo Institute of Technology in 1980 and 1984 respectively. After beginning his career as a research associate at the Nagaoka University of Technology, he became a lecturer and associate professor at Kumamoto University. Then, he was an associate professor at the Tokyo Institute of Technology before returning as a full professor to Kumamoto University in 2005 and serving concurrently as Dean of the Graduate School of Science and Technology and Vice President for International Affairs. Now, he is the director of Kumamoto University's International Research Organization for Advanced Science and Technology (IROAST) and a Senior University Research Administrator (URA).