



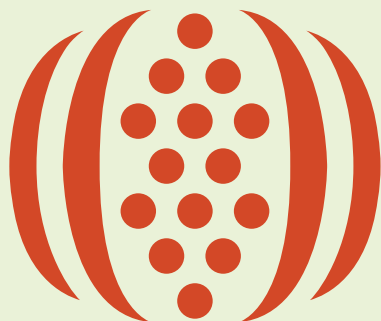
OIST



C-HUB

Center for  
Professional Development  
& Inclusive Excellence

The Center for Professional Development and Inclusive Excellence (C-Hub)



# BI-ANNUAL REPORT

March 2023 — March 2025

Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology

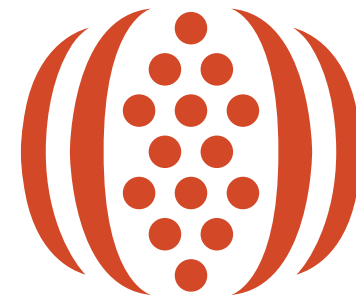
沖縄科学技術大学院大学







## The Center for Professional Development and Inclusive Excellence (C-Hub)



# BI-ANNUAL REPORT

March 2023 – March 2025

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<https://www.oist.jp/c-hub>

Faculty Affairs Office  
Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology



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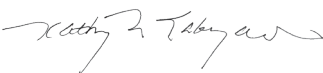
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Executive Summary

In the past three years, the Center for Professional Development and Inclusive Excellence (C-Hub) has had a remarkable trajectory as we continued to expand our programs and activities to support the university’s commitment to academic and research excellence. Our impact has extended beyond OIST to support universities, organizations, and businesses across Japan and the world. C-Hub’s unique model has strengthened the connections across siloes and enabled students, faculty, staff, researchers, and leaders to enhance their capacity for the achievement of individual and institutional success. We have remained true to upholding our tenets to empower all individuals to have a sense of belonging, to thrive, and to succeed through the cultivation of inclusive, equitable climates.

Some of the highlights in the past year include a new intensive 5-day Teaching and Course Design Bootcamp where we welcomed faculty from other universities in Japan to join our cohort of OIST participants. This highly interactive, collaborative experience catalyzed interdisciplinary exchange and innovative cross-fertilization of ideas amongst students, faculty, researchers, and staff. We have also launched a transformative Self Reflection Workshop Series to expand self-awareness and intentionality in making choices – whether in one’s personal, academic, or professional life. C-Hub has responded to the ever-expanding needs of OIST students and researchers with important workshop series on Writing, Academic Job Market, and Enhancing Web Presence. Our Inclusive Excellence Symposium Series has become a signature event: the keynote speakers for the Inclusive Communication Symposium challenged norms and assumptions about our educational, research, and global structures and practices that preclude the achievement of excellence and innovation.

Respectfully submitted,



Kathy Takayama, PhD  
Executive Director  
Interim Dean of Faculty Affairs

Total participation of faculty, students, postdocs and researchers, administrative staff and leaders, alumni, and external colleagues over the past 2 years reached an impressive 2,239 participants – an impressive achievement with only 4 staff (including myself) teaching and facilitating the entirety of our programs and services. We are grateful for the engagement and ongoing support of our colleagues and partners across OIST and the strong support of our leadership. The past year has also been quite a challenge, as I was appointed to the position of Interim Dean of the Faculty in addition to continuing to lead C-Hub as Executive Director and serve as Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at OIST. I am indebted to my extraordinary colleagues at C-Hub and in the Faculty Affairs Office for their dedication, trust, and impeccable professionalism.

Finally, it is with mixed emotions that I sign off on this report as I have recently announced my departure from OIST to return to the US. It has been an extraordinary privilege and honor to establish C-Hub and to collaborate with my dedicated, talented colleagues over these past four years. I am so grateful to my team and to OIST’s leadership who entrusted me to enact a new vision and design for a center for professional development and inclusive excellence unlike any other in Japan and the world. Heartfelt kudos to Ayumi Nagai, Brandon Conlon, and Oksana Burduzhan for your outstanding contributions, your creative spirit, and your willingness to embark upon this journey. My appreciation goes to the faculty, students, researchers, and staff who have enthusiastically worked with us, provided us with invaluable feedback and input, and who continue to inspire us. I am confident that the trajectory of C-Hub will continue to build on this collaborative momentum and I am excited for what the future holds.

# C-Hub Mission & Overview

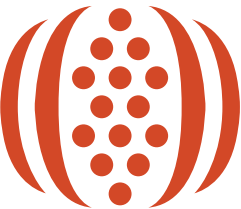
The Center for Professional Development and Inclusive Excellence (C-Hub) aims to strengthen the whole OIST community through centralized, strategic capacity-building that:

- i. provides faculty, students, postdocs, administrative staff, research staff, and administrative leaders with research-informed professional development programs and opportunities for mentorship, career and personal growth;
- ii. fosters academic and research excellence by actively cultivating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive climate so all can succeed;
- iii. connects and creates collaborations across and beyond the university;
- iv. creates a forum for exchange, sharing and benchmarking of data, progress, and best practices to amplify OIST’s reach, impact, and recognition as a unique model for professional development that incorporates equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The logo for the Center for Professional Development and Inclusive Excellence is inspired by the seed pod of the indigenous sannin (*muuchiigaasa*) plant, or shell ginger. The seeds of the sannin plant are encased in a bright orange shell. Okinawans use sannin in traditional cuisine.

The C-Hub logo draws inspiration from the individual seeds encased in the sannin pod to represent the potential of every individual. Yet, seeds require nourishment and cultivation to grow and flourish. It is in this spirit that C-Hub aspires to bring our community together to create inclusive, productive environments for the

ongoing development of all individuals. In so doing, we can foster the growth of future generations across our global community.



We are grateful for the collaboration and generous guidance of our OIST Eedee\* Group colleagues for the inspiration of our logo. The Eedee Initiative engages the OIST community to further embrace local Okinawan culture and become an integrated part of the local society.

\*Eedee means ‘working together’ in *Uchinaaguchi*, the Okinawan language.



seeds of the sannin plant

# C-Hub Staff and Bios



Executive Director  
Interim Dean of Faculty Affairs  
**Kathy Takayama, Ph.D.**

Kathy has over 25 years of experience in creating and leading innovations to develop engaging, inclusive, and productive academic environments for a wide range of universities across the world. Her achievements have been recognized by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, the National Academies Fellowship of the US National Research Council, and the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, which elected her as President from 2014-2015.

She has received national and international teaching awards, including the Australian College of Educators Award, and the David White Award from the Australian Society for Microbiology, and serves on several editorial boards of journals in the scholarship of teaching and learning, and on international university and higher education advisory boards. She has delivered numerous keynotes on STEM education, technology and innovation in higher education, the scholarship of teaching and learning, and diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI). A graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Kathy was a faculty member at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia, where she researched the molecular regulation of RNA processing mechanisms in marine *Vibrio* bacteria. Subsequently, Kathy was appointed professor of molecular biology, cell biology, & biochemistry, and executive director of the Harriet W. Sheridan Center at Brown University; after Brown, she became the founding executive director of the Center for Teaching and Learning at Columbia University where she held a joint appointment as professor of biological sciences. In 2017, she was invited by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute as a

Senior Fellow in Science Education to collaborate on the National Inclusive Excellence initiative to create inclusive, equitable pathways in the sciences. More recently, Kathy was honored as the 2023 National University of Singapore Educator-in-Residence.

As the founding executive director of C-Hub, she leads the strategy and development of programs, services, and projects on pedagogy and course design, career development, DEI, mentorship & leadership, and collaboration & communication in partnership with her colleagues at the center and across OIST. As the executive director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, she provides strategic leadership for promoting and supporting DEI at OIST, and developing the infrastructure needed to sustain DEI. In this role, Kathy leads institutional capacity-building for creating equitable and inclusive environments where all members are valued and provided with opportunities to thrive. In addition to these key roles, Kathy collaborates with administrative leaders, Divisions and units across OIST, the Faculty Council, the OIST Researcher Council, and the Student Council to support OIST’s academic and research mission.

Kathy is currently also serving as Interim Dean of Faculty Affairs and oversees the Faculty Affairs Office.

Kathy originally hails from New York City (and she misses her bagels) but her favorite state is Rhode Island. She lived in Sydney, Australia for half of her career, where she learned to appreciate Tim Tams and lamingtons (but still hasn’t learned the rules of cricket).





**Professional & Culture Development Specialist**  
**Ayumi Nagai**

With over 10 years of human resources experience in global financial institutions in Tokyo and the Asia Pacific, Ayumi has specialized in dynamic and engaging talent development expertise for professionals from diverse backgrounds in international, cross-cultural environments. After shifting her career to academia, Ayumi is enthusiastic about applying her background to facilitate exchanges across diverse members of the OIST community toward the enhancement of an inclusive and equitable culture at OIST using coaching

methodologies. She works expansively across the university to support the professional development needs of administrative staff, and also collaborates with her C-Hub colleagues to develop programs and initiatives across university. Originally from Kyoto, Ayumi has a heritage in Okinawa and enjoys traveling, reading, cooking, and farming with family and friends. Ayumi recently developed her love for Ryukyuan traditional dance and musical instrument (Sanshin), practicing and performing at local occasions.



**Assistant Director for Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Professional Development**  
**Brandon Conlon, Ed.D.**

Prior to joining OIST, Brandon served as Director of the Center for Teaching Innovation at D'Youville University in Buffalo, New York, an historically women's college that is now a university specialized in applied health sciences. Brandon holds an EdD in higher education from the University of Liverpool, where he researched the Chinese students' conceptualization of liberal arts education at New York University's joint-venture university campus, NYU Shanghai. While this research was ongoing, he joined the faculty at NYU Shanghai, where he served for eight years, was a Senior Lecturer and built the English for Academic Purposes Program, part of the core curriculum. Brandon completed his undergraduate education at the University of

Massachusetts, Amherst, in linguistics and philosophy, and while working as a lecturer at the University of Liverpool's joint-venture university partnership with Xi'an-Jiaotong University in China, completed his MA in applied linguistics. He has nearly 20 years of rich teaching experiences in international higher education environments.

His interests in professional development start with an eye to the way different stakeholders, while pursuing their own personal development, contribute to the overall learning of the organization, especially organizational identity dynamics in relation to organizational mission and values. He is also the founding editor of the website Liberal Arts Global

Lens, which is currently in a partnership with the Pacific Alliance of Liberal Arts Colleges. Brandon is a member of the Professional and Organizational Development Network, Human Development and Capabilities Association, and the World Council on Intercultural and Global Competence.

At OIST, Brandon works alongside the director to review the professional development needs of graduate students and postdocs, develops training curricula and provides consultations to meet these identified needs.



**Administrative Staff Assistant**  
**Oksana Burduzhan**

Oksana joined OIST in September 2019, bringing extensive corporate accounting experience from Ukraine and England. With a degree in economics and a passion for art, she embraced a new chapter in Okinawa, eager to broaden her professional horizons.

Starting in the Faculty Affairs office, Oksana provided comprehensive administrative support for the Postdoctoral Development section. Her dedication and skills directed her to join the Center for Professional Development and Inclusive Excellence (C-Hub) in 2021, where she now supports professional development activities, assists the Executive Director, and contributes to cross-divisional projects as well as external collaborations.

Oksana's enthusiasm for building connections between science and art led her to initiate and curate OIST's inaugural community art exhibition, "Synergy," which highlighted the artistic and scientific talents within the OIST community, reaching out to both the Okinawan community and international visitors.


Outside of work, Oksana enjoys the natural beauty of Okinawa, spending weekends by the sea or engaging in art-related activities, including offering art classes for OIST community members, sharing her passion and creativity with others.





# Summary of C-Hub Activities and Services

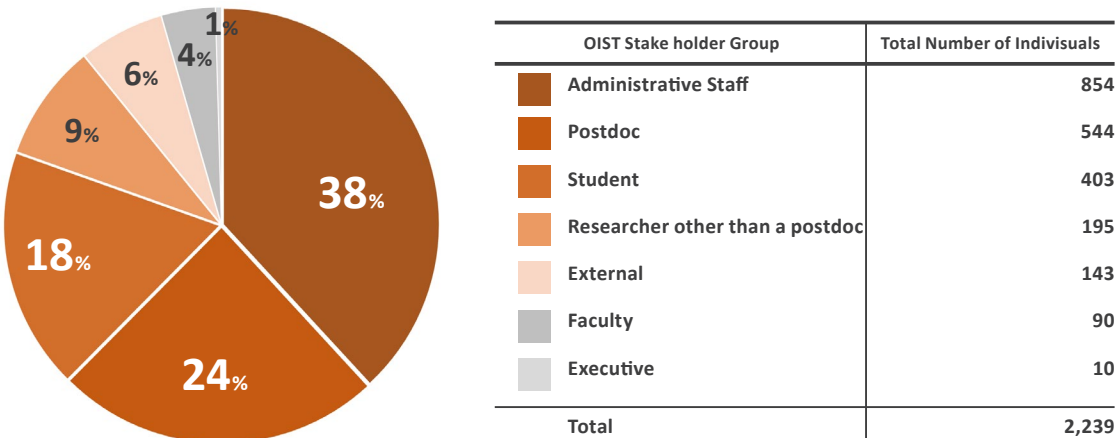
## Distribution of C-Hub Services



**1,925** participants attended  
C-Hub’s programs events

**314** OISTers participated in  
C-Hub’s consultations and coaching

C-Hub Reach and Impact (Mar2023–Mar2025)



## Program Launch





## List of C-Hub Programs and Events

### Certificate Program

Teaching and Course Design Certificate Program  
Teaching and Course Design Certificate Bootcamp

### Fellowship Programs

C-Hub Visiting Fellow Program

### Faculty Programs

New Faculty Orientation  
Annual Faculty Retreat  
Junior Faculty/ New Faculty Roundtable

### International Symposium

2024 Symposium: Inclusive Communication

### Workshops, Seminars, and Additional Programs

Peer Mentoring Circles

Workshops and Seminars for Faculty, Postdoctoral Scholars and Students

- Academic Job Market Series
- Non-Academic Job Market Series
- Writing Workshop Series
- Career talk: “From Quarks to Chromosomes – a Life in Science”
- Coming out in class: Why active learning is important in science courses for LGBTQIA students
- New Postdoc Orientation

University-Wide Workshops

- Effective, Fabulous Poster Presentations
- Enhancing Web Presence Series
- Self-Reflection Workshop Series
- Study Session Series for University Staff

### Retreats and Strategic Planning Facilitation

Core Faculty Retreat  
IT-PPI communication workshop (Section Teambuilding Retreat)  
Research Resource and Finance Section Retreat

### Training Sessions and Activities

Faculty Search Committee Implicit Bias training  
Responsible Conduct in Research Training for the Graduate School

## Full Descriptions of Programs, Events, and Activities

### Teaching and Course Design Certificate Program

*“One of the things that stood out to me was that during the program sessions we had a lot of active learning sessions, discussions with partners, or first-hand teaching to other program participants. It was fascinating to me, because we were learning about active learning while using active learning... It is essential to have this kind of knowledge and know these techniques if I want to stay in academia for my career and succeed in the future.”*

*“Throughout my education I had not had a very good experience of classes because some of them were too advanced or too big or catered to certain students in the class and not to everybody. I always wanted to have a strategy to be prepared for a diversity of students to meet everybody’s needs. That’s why I took these workshops...They were some of the best designed and well-planned that I have taken. Truly amazing!”*

The Teaching and Course Design Certificate Program, taught by executive director Kathy Takayama, is an introduction to the core components of student-centered teaching and effective course design. Excellent, impactful teaching requires the same rigor and evidence-informed strategy as does impactful research. Research innovation is advanced by the exchange and contributions from diverse expertise and disciplines. Similarly, excellent teaching creates learning

environments that establish fertile ground for inquiry, exploration, and novel insights; inclusive teaching facilitates the conditions that promote this rigorous exchange. The program focuses on the development of pedagogical skills to actively engage students to support their learning and apply best practices to create high caliber courses. Using a rhetorical lens, participants also refine their communication skills that are fundamental to every career.

Modules:

- Reflections on Teaching and Creating Inclusive Learning Environments
- Rhetorical Practice: Effective Communication
- Learning Outcomes and Your Syllabus
- Active Learning: from Reflections, Think-Pair-Share to Jigsaws and AI Hacks
- Putting it all together: Course Design



## Teaching and Course Design Certificate Program Bootcamp

The Teaching and Course Design Certificate Program Bootcamp is a highly interactive week-long immersion into international best practice course design and interactive teaching. Participants have the opportunity to design engaging strategies for classroom instruction at all levels, carefully structured syllabi and courses for maximum impact, and receive ongoing feedback on their work. The intensive bootcamp is designed for faculty, students, researchers, and staff, including those who are new

to teaching and those who have had experience and are interested in international best practices. The program is open to OIST participants and participants from other universities.

The 5-module interactive program covers inclusive teaching, active learning, effective communication, using AI effectively in teaching, course and syllabus design.



**Micro-Credentialing:**  
Participants who have successfully completed the certificate program receive a digital badge from C-Hub. A digital credential or badge is a representation of a learning outcome, experience, or competency based on the Open Badges Standard. C-Hub digital credentials are issued and securely verified by Credly, allowing them to be shared online easily via social networks like LinkedIn.



C-Hub's digital badge designed by Jeff Prine of OIST's Digital Content, Brand and Design Section.

Number of participants

88

Faculty = 2  
Postdocs/Researcher = 45  
Students = 27  
Administration = 4  
External Participants = 10

## Faculty Programs

### New Faculty Orientation

New Faculty Orientation is hosted by the Faculty Affairs Office (FAO) and C-Hub executive director Kathy Takayama to welcome new faculty members and support their onboarding process. The session provides an overview of how FAO and C-Hub can support faculty throughout their career at OIST. New faculty have an opportunity to meet their new colleagues and learn about key elements for building their research units, teaching, and mentoring.

### Annual Faculty Retreats

The Annual Retreat provides OIST faculty with the opportunity to exchange ideas and challenges, and to inform potential future initiatives in a collegial setting. Facilitated by executive director Takayama, the retreat is designed to strengthen the sense of community amongst faculty, and to create a welcoming culture for new faculty.



**2024**  
**Topic: Interdisciplinary connections**

Faculty continued to enjoy the unique “research speed-dating” format to establish new connections, discover the exciting and transformative research projects of their colleagues, and explore potential areas of collaboration for open centers. Informal break time was provided for faculty to enjoy a “gallery walk” of research posters from various units and further discuss areas of interest.

Number of participants: 20

**2025**  
**Topic: Research Connections**

We were excited to welcome our new faculty to the community in the 2025 retreat. The popular “research speed-dating” session allowed our new colleagues to learn about the interdisciplinary research in various OIST units, and provided them with the opportunity to share their research with the rest of the OIST faculty. Informal group discussions provided further opportunities to discuss research collaborations, effective leadership and mentorship, and ways to foster networking and community. In fun continuation of the spirit of exchange and connection, we held a white elephant swap where faculty brought wrapped mystery gifts for swapping/swiping/cajoling, etc!

Number of participants: 14





C-Hub International Symposium: Inclusive Excellence Symposium Series

C-Hub’s Symposium aims to foster exploration of topics of value horizontally across the organization and build a discourse community around these values. The symposium attracts an audience of faculty, students, researchers, staff, and leaders across OIST, Japan, and internationally to exchange best practices, ideas, and challenges from multiple perspectives, experiences, and institutional contexts.

The aim is to bring together bold ideas and innovative thinkers to explore themes that enhance our ability to engender excellence through inclusion. Each year, we focus on a specific topic (2022: Inclusive Mentoring; 2023: Inclusive Leadership; 2024: Inclusive Communication) to invite the broader community to share their work, insights, and practices.

2024: Inclusive Communication

Our 2024 theme, Inclusive Communication, created a forum for considering the ways in which organizations and individuals can center equity and inclusion to enable maximally effective communication structures and practices to ultimately foster engagement, creativity, and wellbeing. Communication is a two-way process of understanding and being understood. Inclusive communication holds us accountable to our assumptions or biases that may exclude full participation and contribution. The keynote speakers were practitioners well-known for breaking down barriers to fully participatory engagement in higher education. The aim was to raise our awareness of what critical voices, data, and representations are erased when information is biased or access to participation is limited. Symposium participants were inspired to take action in their own roles and environments.



“The symposium provided a space for engaging in meaningful dialogue, listening to personal stories about lived experiences, hearing about and reflecting upon how inclusive communication can help enhance lives.”

“I learned how to have open honest conversations about how to be inclusive and what that means. You guys did an amazing job finding engaging speakers and scheduling both time for learning and time for reflection.”

“I greatly valued the chance to highlight the experiences of neurodivergent individuals by sharing stories. The event also provided an excellent opportunity for networking with scholars worldwide...It was commendable that the Okinawan staff at OIST were encouraged to share their unique perspectives. Overall, I had a wonderful experience at the symposium, and I want to extend my gratitude to the C-Hub staff for their warm welcome and for making my visit exceptional.”

Peer Mentoring Circles Program

A Peer Mentoring Circle (PMC) is comprised of a group of colleagues/peers who meet regularly to exchange professional experiences, challenges, interests, and goals for the purpose of sharing and discussing strategies or resources, and creating a collegial, supportive community to mentor and learn from each other.

Research has shown that peer mentoring is one of the most productive mentoring practices, resulting in long-term impact through the creation of strong networks whose members comprise a diverse collection of professional and personal experience, expertise, and backgrounds. Over time, PMCs establish a strong sense of community whereby its members continue to support one another in various iterations throughout their career.

C-Hub’s Peer Mentoring Circles met monthly to share experiences and ideas on key topics of interest to the group, and serve as a collegial group of mentors for one another. C-Hub executive director Kathy Takayama facilitated the initial orientation meeting to help establish group goals, plans, and provide best practice guidelines.



“Joining the researchers’ group at PMC has been an invaluable experience. Researchers’ insights have also been helpful [in my daily job] when editing the website. Thank you so much for connecting us—it made a real difference.”

“I learnt a lot [from Lily’s talk], and also I was motivated for continuing thinking how to blend in the DEI in the day-to-day life. It was great to have this session with PMC members as well.”

The FY2023 – 24 PMC cohort was provided with the opportunity to nominate an invited speaker to deliver a presentation on a topic related to PMC interests. We were thrilled to welcome Dr. Lily Zheng (they/ them) to join us as the featured speaker. Dr. Zheng is a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) strategist, consultant, speaker and author who has been named a Forbes D&I Trailblazer and LinkedIn Top Voice on Racial Equity, and has been featured in the Harvard Business Review and the New York Times. Dr. Zheng’s highly engaging and interactive session “No-Nonsense Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Action: A Fireside Chat” provided opportunities for an all-OIST audience, as well as a smaller, personal PMC audience to discuss practical approaches toward fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion that lead to meaningful change in academic environments.

Dr. Lily Zheng



New Postdoc Orientation



The New Postdoc Orientation is modeled after international best practice at other major research universities, to introduce postdocs to the wider OIST community as they strategically map out their career, personal, and work-life priorities/needs during their scientific training at OIST. The event is also intended to create community amongst the postdoctoral scholars. Postdocs had the opportunity to hear presentations from C-Hub and other important offices and groups at OIST on how they can support postdocs’ career and work/life balance needs.

Groups present:

- Core Facilities
- Ganjuu Wellbeing Service
- Grants Section
- LGBTQ+ Allies Group
- Library
- OIST Innovation
- OIST Researcher Community (ORC)
- Peer Supporters Group
- Society for Neurodiversity
- University Community Services



Seminars and Workshops

The Center offered a variety of workshops throughout the year for faculty, postdocs, graduate students, and staff.

Academic Job Market Series

The Academic Job Market Series provides guidance on each phase of the academic job search to support OIST students and researchers in the next stage of their career.

Modules in the Series:

- Module 1: CV Writing
- Module 2: Writing Cover Letters
- Module 3: Writing Research Statements
- Module 4: Writing Teaching Statements
- Module 5: Writing Diversity Statements
- Module 6: Job Search Process

“I am in my final year of graduation and thought this was a perfect opportunity to learn about the academic job market and the search process.”

Non-Academic Job Market Series

The Non-Academic Job Market Series provides students and researchers with practical guidance on the conventions, strategies, and process for applying for non-academic positions. Participants learn how to contextualize their academic research toward industry positions and receive hands-on training for job interviews.

Modules in the Series:

- Module 1: Writing résumés
- Module 2: Writing cover letters
- Module 3: Transferable skills from academic science to other career settings
- Module 4: Job interviews
- Module 5: Job search process
- Module 6: Further challenges in the job search process

“Feedback from out-of-field colleagues was highly appreciated and possibly more representative of an actual job situation, where the interviewing panel may be from the same/similar field... Discussion with out-of-field colleagues provides the opportunity to make the application materials clearer and more accessible, thus possibly making it more appealing.”

Enhancing Web Presence Series

The Enhancing Web Presence Series highlights the significance of our web presence in influencing our career opportunities and interactions. Participants learn how the representation of their professional selves online impacts networking, job hunting, collaboration, and visibility.

Modules in the Series:

- Module 1: Introducing your professional self to the online world
- Module 2: Developing an ecology of different platforms and processes
- Module 3: Creative ways of sharing scientific work
- Module 4: Building and maintaining an audience
- Module 5: Writing for alternative mediums
- Module 6: Creating a professional website

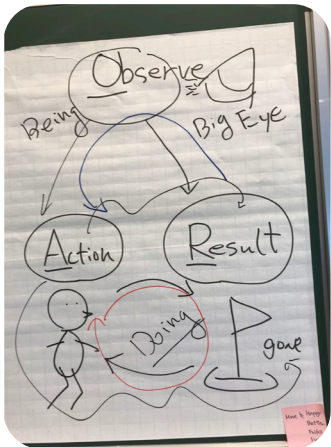


Self Reflection Workshop Series

This workshop applies Ontological Coaching\* Methodology to create time and space to pause from our busy routines. Using scaffolded, guided activities participants are encouraged to engage in self-reflection through multiple domains to discover who they are “being” and who they are “becoming”.

- Module 1: Introduction to Self-Reflection: Ontological Exploration of Self
- Module 2: Ontological Exploration of Emotion
- Module 3: Ontological Exploration of Body
- Module 4: Ontological Exploration of Language

Ontological Coaching\* - see page 17 for details.





## Study Sessions for University Staff

This is a series of sessions for members in the administrative and management divisions to gain overall fundamental knowledge of science research activities, and to connect this understanding to a broader perspective of their role in the university. There are few occasions within the university staff's routine operations to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the university's organizational structure and the dynamics of research environments. This program not only provides a systematic foundation of knowledge concerning research activities and the role of graduate school but also adopts an interactive format, enabling participants to freely ask questions and engage in dialogues. In addition to offering new insights, the program aspires to inspire positive transformations in work practices and interdepartmental communication. As a program that embodies and promotes the OneOIST spirit, which the university upholds, it attracts a significant number of staff participants each year.

Session 1: Researchers, and Science & Technology

Session 2: Inside Story and Background of Research Activities

Session 3: Research Resources and Research Support

Session 4: Organization of Universities

*"It was a great opportunity to reflect on what it means to work at OIST and the environment we're part of. Hearing the big-picture stories about research and innovation helped me understand what I'm contributing to—it was both interesting and motivating."*

*"I was inspired by the active questions and comments from other participants in this series, and the role of facilitator was very insightful."*



## Writing Workshop Series

This is a workshop series for all writers who want to boost comprehensive mastery of the composition process from the sentence to the wider organization of any piece of writing. By considering how even scientific writing is a story, participants learn how to become more intentional in their writing, reflect on what makes effective and high-quality writing, and develop skills in close reading. Participants have the opportunity to work on drafts of a writing project currently in progress to apply what they learn in the series.

Modules in the Series:

Module 1: Writing as Process and Story

Module 2: Close Reading for Better Writing, Part I

Module 3: Close Reading for Better Writing, Part II

Module 4: Balancing Data with Purpose and Voice

Module 5: Enhancing the Integration of Sources

Module 6: Clean, Crisp, & Clear: Tidying up Your Writing

## Individual Consultations and Coaching

The Center provides consultations on a variety of topics:

- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Course and syllabus development
- Pedagogy – best practices
- Online course design, online teaching
- Teaching observations
- Career consultations
- Communication, presentations, interview skills
- Mentorship
- Conflict resolution
- Scientific writing
- CVs and resumés (for the academic and non-academic job market)
- Teaching portfolios, teaching statements, teaching philosophy statements
- Documenting your teaching for academic job applications
- Diversity statements
- Grant Writing

314

...consultations or coaching sessions with members of the OIST community were conducted by the C-Hub during the period of Mar 2023 - Mar 2025

C-Hub offers personal and team coaching led by Ayumi Nagai to support OIST members and teams through the strength-based development method, using Gallup's CliftonStrengths online assessment.

It's not until we intentionally consider people's talents and the intricacy in how each person naturally thinks, feels, and behaves that we understand the uniqueness of each individual. The Gallup research shows that people that have the opportunity to use their CliftonStrengths are six times more likely to agree that they have the chance to do what they do best every day, and three times more likely to report having an excellent quality of life. Participants have the opportunity to consider how they can align their CliftonStrengths with their workplace and career goals.

C-Hub also offers consecutive coaching sessions using the Ontological Coaching techniques, led by Ayumi Nagai. Ontological coaching is an approach that supports growth by focusing on an individual's way of "being", shaped by the interplay between thoughts, emotions, and actions. Ontological coaching explores and delves into the core beliefs, perspectives, and underlying assumptions that shape a person's reality, fostering shifts in perspective that may have previously gone unnoticed. Emphasizing the integration of language, emotions, and the body, it enhances self-awareness, facilitates effective communication, and empowers individuals to make intentional choices aligned with their values and goals. This methodology is widely applicable in fields such as leadership development, personal transformation, and fostering more authentic relationships.

*"The coaching sessions helped me greatly in realizing my career goals and further enabled me to plan my way towards achieving them."*

*"Coaching helped me face the fear I had about stepping out of my comfort zone. By getting in touch with my emotions through coaching sessions, I become more ready to take on challenges."*



## C-Hub Visiting Fellow

A university that maximally benefits from its diverse community places paramount importance on expanding its insights toward creating inclusive classrooms and research environments. For a creative, courageous institution like OIST, it is crucial for our students, faculty, researchers, and administrators to engage with bold international educators and innovators. C-Hub's Visiting Fellow Program fosters exchange and synthesis in collaboration with distinguished educators and experts across the world. Visiting Fellows present seminars or workshops, and engage in discussions with the OIST community on topics of relevance to C-Hub's mission. Visiting Fellows also have the opportunity to collaborate with C-Hub on a project or program that will benefit the OIST community and extend our capacity toward supporting justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

C-Hub was pleased to welcome inaugural Visiting Fellow, Dr. Taralyn (Tari) Tan, to collaborate with Director Takayama on a novel model for transforming the science curriculum: Science Reconsidered.

Science Reconsidered engages educators in a critical reflection of the dominant narratives that have influenced the teaching of our scientific disciplines and re-contextualize the teaching of science to affirm a plurality of contexts (societal, cultural, historical, epistemological, etc.).



### Dr. Taralyn Tan

**Assistant Dean for Educational Innovation and Scholarship in the Office for Graduate Education at Harvard Medical School**

## Events hosted by Dr. Tan

### Workshops:

#### Designing Inclusive STEM Training Environments

This workshop introduced approaches to facilitate inclusion, equity, and belonging in the classroom, laboratory, and other contexts. Participants learned about evidence-based practices to promote equity, inclusion, and belonging and ideas for how to implement some of those practices.

#### Supporting Women in STEM: Looking Towards the Future

This workshop framed the current state of gender equity in STEM, including progress that has been made, challenges that remain, and efforts to support women in STEM. The workshop also explored barriers and priorities to support gender equity within the local OIST environment.

### Brownbag Sessions:

#### From Synapses to Students: One Neuroscientist's Professional Journey Making Connections in STEM

Dr. Tan described her professional journey from graduate school studying neuroscience to her current position in higher education leadership. She shared advice to students and postdocs interested in further exploring career opportunities in the teaching / higher education administration space. Dr. Tan was also joined by Dr. Ian McLachlan, a scientist at the Boston area-based Regenta Therapeutics, who described his career trajectory and his work in the biotech industry. Dr. McLachlan earned his PhD in Neurobiology at Harvard University and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in neuroscience at MIT.

### Tips and Tricks for Teaching on Zoom

This session introduced educators to tools and practical tips for creating effective and engaging online learning environments using the Zoom platform.





## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Since our founding, C-Hub has placed continual emphasis on integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) throughout our programs, events, and consultations. We have established a new model for a unique Center that provides teaching and learning support, faculty development, career development for students and postdoctoral fellows, and professional training for research staff, administrative staff, and leaders, whereby our practices, policies, and programs are designed through inclusive excellence.

Our excellence in teaching, research, and service to the community and society is realized through the unequivocal inclusion and engagement of our diverse populations, and the cultivation of an environment where all members have a sense of belonging, are valued, and can thrive. Innovation, creativity, and excellence are crucially dependent upon our ability to diversify and foster the talent pool of our researchers, educators, and workforce across all professions. For institutions to succeed in this regard, all members must take responsibility to cultivate climates that are inclusive, equitable, and allow all individuals to thrive.

As director of C-Hub and director of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion at OIST, Director Takayama has continued to spearhead and expand C-Hub's model across our institutional practices and processes.

- Implicit Bias Training for OIST Faculty Search Committees, OIST Tenure & Promotion Committee
- Responsible Conduct of Research Training (including discussions on implicit bias, micro/macro-aggressions, creating inclusive research climates, inclusive communication)
- Inclusive Communication Symposium
- Revision of Faculty Search Process
- Establishment and launch of OIST DEI Task Force
- Initiation of Disability Support Coordination across OIST
- Development of DEI Strategic Framework (initially designed for OIST's MEXT Application; henceforth institutionalized to inform OIST's DEI Task Force roadmap)
- National presentations on DEI at: Keizai Doyukai, Q-WEA Okinawa-Kyushu Universities Conference, Hirosaki University – Northern Tohoku University Gender Equality Symposium), RMAN-J National Conference.
- Consultation discussions with Japan Science and Technology Agency, Ritsumeikan University, NanoLSI, Osaka Metropolitan University, Temple University – Japan, University of Tokyo)



## Center Publications, Resources, and Presentations

Resources for the OIST Community

C-Hub "Spotlight" Newsletter (available in English and Japanese)

Since May 2023, the Center has published ten issues of the newsletter for our internal and external audiences on the following topics:

- Issue 5, May 2023, Teamwork
- Issue 6, June 2023, Allyship
- Issue 7, September 2023, Building Community
- Issue 8, November 2023, Stress Management
- Issue 9, December 2023, Disability
- Issue 10, January 2024, Fresh Starts in Behavior Change
- Issue 11, June 2024, Understanding Gender
- Issue 12, September 2024, Goal Setting
- Issue 13, November 2024, Time Management
- Issue 14, December 2024, Strategic Decision Making



Newsletter

Resources: <https://www.oist.jp/c-hub/resources>

- Teaching and Mentoring Resources
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Best Practices for Cultivating a Productive, Inclusive Research Environment
- Career Resources
- C-Hub Library

Conference Presentations and Invited Talks (2023 March - 2025 March)

2023

Invited keynote, National University of Singapore: *“Cultivating resilient ecosystems through new paradigms of mentorship and leadership”* (Takayama)

Invited speaker, Harvard Medical School Department of Neurobiology: *“Creating climates for inclusive mentoring”* (Takayama)

Invited speaker, RIKEN Center for Brain Science: *“Making Science Inclusive”* (Takayama)

Invited speaker, National University of Singapore: *“The development of mentoring structures and constellations”* (Takayama)

Invited speaker, University of Tokyo: *“Opportunities to revise hiring search practices in universities to improve equity and excellence”* (Takayama)

Invited presenter, US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue, Washington D.C. (Takayama)

Conference speaker, National Postdoctoral Association Conference, Philadelphia: *“Sustainable Development: Policy is Stronger with Science”* [Takayama; with co-presenters Susan Hackwood and Yaqiong Li (University of California-Riverside), and Julianne McCall (California Governor’s Office of Planning and Research)]

2024

Keynote speaker, North Tohoku National University Gender Equality Symposium: *“Empowering our future through inclusive excellence”* (Takayama)

Invited speaker, Harvard Medical School Department of Neurobiology: *“Integrative paths in the scholarship of teaching and learning: a scientist’s journey”* (Takayama)

Invited speaker, National University of Singapore: *“Decoding the disciplines to scaffold disciplinary and interdisciplinary thinking”* (Takayama)

Invited speaker, University of Tokyo: *“Inclusive Teaching: Creating engaging learning climates for creativity, motivation, and lifelong impact”* (Takayama)

Invited speaker, Tohoku University: *“Establishing globally competitive research careers: developing your international toolkit”* (Takayama)

Invited speaker, University of California – Berkeley: *“The development of mentoring constellations for international postdoctoral fellows”* (Takayama)

Invited speaker, Keizai Doyukai: *“Empowering our future through inclusive excellence”* (Takayama)

Invited speaker, Temple University – Japan: *“The development of inclusive mentoring structures and constellations”* (Takayama)

Invited speaker, Nanyang Technological University: *“Inclusive Pedagogy”* (Takayama)

Invited speaker, Nanyang Technological University: *“The development of mentoring structures and networks”* (Takayama)

Conference speaker, RMAN-J Conference: *“Aiming for equity and inclusion for the future of research in Japan”* (Takayama)

Conference speaker, Q-WEA Conference: *“Women’s leadership: Peer Mentoring Circles”* (Takayama)

Conference speaker, International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: *“Reframing international mentorship: Moving from hegemonic narratives to centering agency and well-being”* (Takayama)

Conference speaker, International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: *“Scholarship [Re]-Reconsidered: The conscientization of three ISSOTL co-founders/CASTL scholars”* (Takayama)

Conference speaker, National Postdoctoral Association Conference: *“The development of international mentoring structures and constellations”* (Takayama)

Conference speaker, Decoding the Disciplines: *“Privileging what is not said: Decoding dominant pedagogies and resistance to action bias”* (Takayama)

Faculty Excellence in Mentoring Award

The Excellence in Mentoring Award recognizes the paramount role that inclusive mentoring plays in the professional development and career advancement of OIST students, postdoctoral scholars, and research staff, and the lifelong impact of excellent mentors. The award honors Faculty members’ demonstrable commitment to engender effective mentoring relationships and their ongoing efforts to cultivate productive, inclusive research environments. The award is announced each year at the OIST Faculty Retreat and the recipient is honored with a custom designed Ryukyu Glass plaque and official citation.

Award Criteria

The outcomes of C-Hub’s Inclusive Mentoring Symposium, together with research on mentoring underline the following key attributes that are demonstrable of effective, inclusive mentors:

1. Inclusive, empathetic leadership and ongoing cultivation of a respectful, healthy, and collaborative research climate for all members.

Effective mentors engage in intellectual, empathetic leadership to support and foster inclusive, equitable, and productive research environments that allow all individuals to develop and succeed. They model best practices and treat every individual respectfully, sharing experiences – including successes and failures – to enable mentees to recognize the multiple pathways in career development.

2. Empowerment of mentees through ongoing feedback and clear communication

Mentoring relationships are strengthened through effective ongoing guidance and constructive feedback. Effective mentors are active listeners, and provide and facilitate clear and transparent communication. Expectations, roles, and practices are clearly articulated for all members of the research team, and mentors also model their own commitment to meeting expectations as well.

3. Commitment and valuing of personal and professional growth

Inclusive mentorship enables all members to develop a sense of belonging and gain ownership over their career trajectory. A mentor’s interest in, and commitment to the mentee’s personal and professional growth and their career interests builds confidence and agency, engenders motivation, and supports the mentee’s lifelong skill development.

4. Proactive advocacy and enhancement of mentee support networks

Effective mentors recognize the constellation of support networks that provide the diverse needs of mentees at various stages of their career. They are strong advocates for their mentees, connecting them to a variety of key individuals, opportunities, and/ or resources that can contribute to the mentee’s professional or personal support networks. Supporting mentees to build their networks fosters independence, while enhancing their agency to seek opportunities and benefit from their expanding mentorship community.



2024 Faculty Excellence in Mentoring Award Recipient

Franz Meitinger (Cell Proliferation and Gene Editing Unit)

2024 Review Committee

Dylan Brown  
Paola Laurino  
Izabela Stefania Porebska  
Nurhanani Binti Razali  
Lakshmipriya Swaminathan  
(with Kathy Takayama serving as non-voting committee chair)

2024 Faculty Excellence in Mentoring Award Citation

Franz Meitinger (Cell Proliferation and Gene Editing Unit)

Amongst the many attributes your students and researchers have highlighted, the theme that resonates most strongly is the welcoming and collaborative research environment you have fostered, where every individual has been able to grow professionally and personally. Your mentees

have extensively described examples of your patience, your encouraging feedback, and your ongoing investment in not only their research progression but just as importantly, in their wellbeing. They express deep appreciation for the countless ways in which you build their self-confidence, placing high importance on their aspirations and challenges to tailor guidance and unwavering support throughout their journey. Your leadership style embraces the unique perspectives and experiences that each member brings to inspire innovation and creativity. Again and again, your lab members express their appreciation for the inclusive climate you have created and your open and positive communication.

In the words of one mentee:

“Franz’s dedication extends beyond mere mentorship; he actively invests time and resources to nurture our holistic development, instilling [our] confidence and a passion for inquiry... He tirelessly champions mentees’ interests, amplifies their voices, and creates pathways for meaningful engagement and advancement. By fostering a supportive ecosystem, he empowers us to navigate challenges, seize opportunities, and forge meaningful connections that extend beyond our immediate sphere, ultimately fostering a culture of collaboration and innovation within the scientific community.”



2025 Faculty Excellence in Mentoring Award Recipient

Keiko Kono (Membranology Unit)

2025 Review Committee

Sergio Verduzco Flores  
Franz Meitinger  
Christian Amor Rodriguez  
Fabienne Ziadi  
(with Kathy Takayama serving as non-voting committee chair)

2025 Faculty Excellence in Mentoring Award Citation

Keiko Kono (Membranology Unit)

The welcoming and supportive research environment you have created in your lab has benefited not only your own students and researchers, but those from other units as well. Indeed, a student from another unit has noted that the inclusive and respectful climate you have fostered has had a tremendous impact on their career and personal well-being. All students who have been fortunate to enter your realm of mentorship, regardless of location, feel valued and empowered to succeed. Time and again, they highlight your ability to bring out their full potential by unequivocally validating the importance of work-life balance and personal well-being in fostering a fulfilling career.

Students have highlighted how your constructive critiques and clear guidance have been instrumental in building their confidence, and how your proactive advocacy has enhanced their visibility in the broader scientific community. Your inclusive leadership has promoted the ability of all of your unit members to collaborate effectively and achieve their best work.

In recognition of your outstanding and impactful mentorship, we hereby present you with the 2025 Faculty Excellence in Mentoring Award.



# External Audiences

The C-Hub’s programs and activities have attracted the interest of universities and organizations nationally and internationally. The following institutions have participated in C-Hub’s events, contacted C-Hub for resources and collaborations, or interviewed C-Hub to learn more about our work.

Universities in Japan

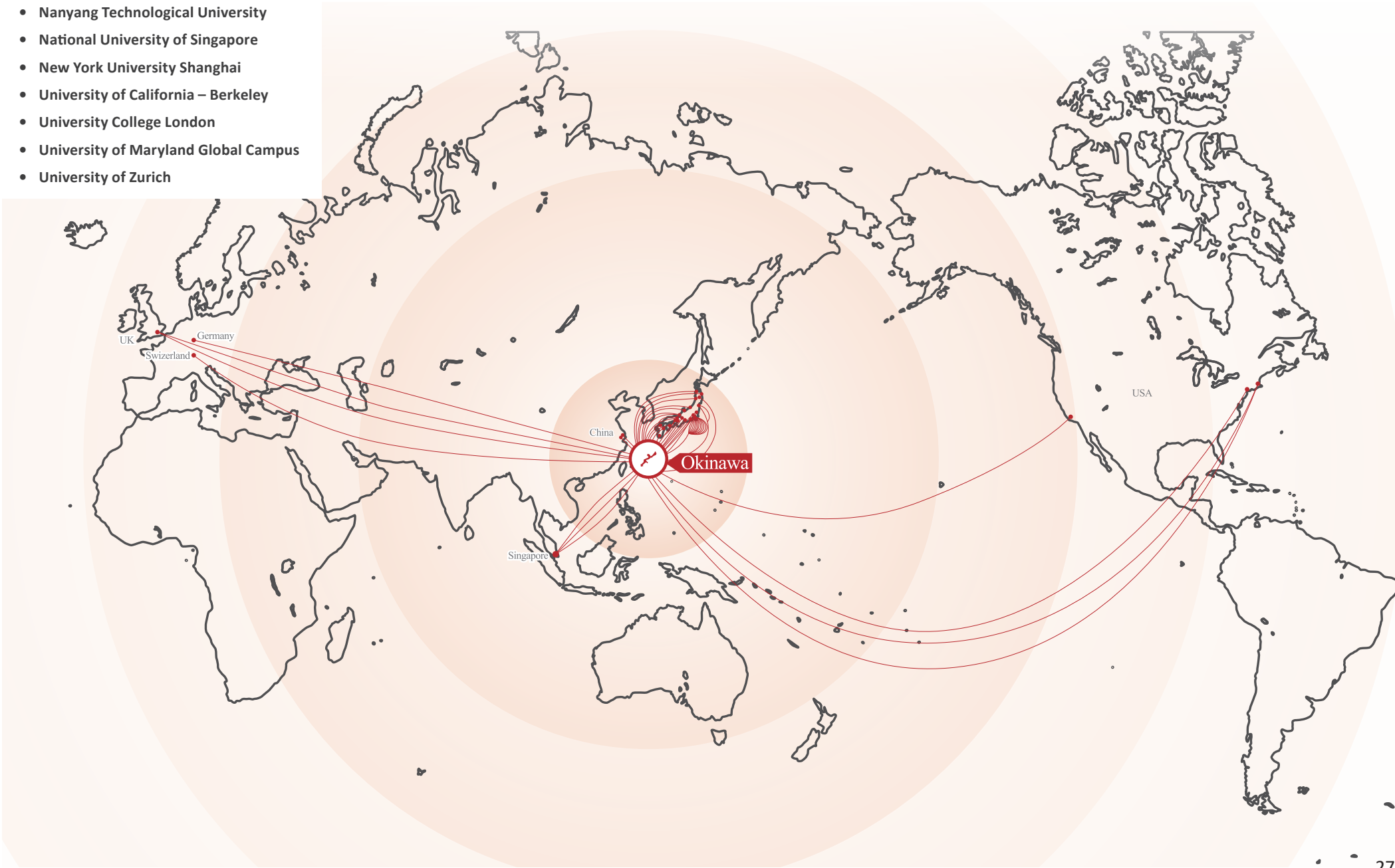
- Akita University
- Chiba University
- Ehime University
- Fukui Prefectural University
- Gifu University
- Hirosaki University
- Ibaraki University
- Iwate University
- Kagoshima University
- Keio University
- Kitasato University
- Kobe Institute of Computing
- Kwansei Gakuin University
- Kyoto Pharmaceutical University
- Kyoto University
- Kyushu Institute of Technology
- Kyushu University
- Nagoya Institute of Technology
- Niigata University
- Osaka University
- Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University
- Saitama University
- Shizuoka University
- Sophia University
- Temple University – Japan
- The University of Tokyo
- Tohoku Gakuin University
- Tohoku University
- Tokyo Institute of Technology
- Tokyo Online University
- Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology
- Toyo University
- University of the Ryukyus
- University of Toyama
- Waseda University

Universities outside of Japan

- Duke Kunshan University
- Harvard Medical School
- Imperial College London
- Nanyang Technological University
- National University of Singapore
- New York University Shanghai
- University of California – Berkeley
- University College London
- University of Maryland Global Campus
- University of Zurich

Other External Audiences

- AmerAsian School in Okinawa
- Digital Asia Foundation
- Honda R&D Co., Ltd.
- Honda Research Institute Europe GmbH
- Howard Hughes Medical Institute
- National Astronomy Observatory of Japan
- National Institute for Materials Science
- National Institute of Technology, Fukui College.
- National Institute of Technology, Hachinohe College
- Okinawa Christian School International
- RIKEN Center for Brain Science
- Solve n+1
- U.S. Consulate General Naha











Promoting growth  
Empowering excellence

OIST



C-HUB  
Center for  
Professional Development  
& Inclusive Excellence

Seed your potential

<https://groups.oist.jp/c-hub>





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