



OIST Press Release

OKINAWA INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GRADUATE UNIVERSITY

November 19, 2011

Inauguration of New University

Following the approval by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and subsequent approval by the Japanese government; a new science and technology graduate university, the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST) has existed in Okinawa since 1st November 2011.

On 19th November 2011, 500 distinguished guests from Okinawa, mainland Japan and overseas came together at the OIST Campus to celebrate the creation of the new graduate university. Although the weather was unusually rainy, the atmosphere at the Inauguration was sunny as the invitees heard speeches from: Dr. Arima, member of the OIST Board of Governors; from Mr Tatsuo Kawabata, Minister of State for Okinawa & Northern Territories Affairs; from Mr. Hirokazu Nakaima, Governor of Okinawa, as well as a keynote speech by Dr. Charles Vest, President Emeritus of the Massachusetts Institute of Science and Technology.

In his address, Dr. Arima said, *“I would like to conclude my talk with the wish that the Okinawa graduate university will cooperate considerably with the University of the Ryukyus and other institutions in research and education, giving hope for the future of Okinawa and particularly for its young people, serving as an outstanding example for internationalization of Japanese universities, and performing a great service for the peoples of the world.”*

Minister Kawabata commented, *“Science and technology will realize people’s dreams. As a Minister responsible for the OIST Graduate University and promotion of Okinawa, I am committed to make every effort under close communication with the Graduate University and with you all to realize further development of Okinawa, as well as the objectives of the Graduate University to contribute to the advancement of science and technology worldwide and to the promotion of Okinawa.”*

In his remarks, Governor Nakaima underlined the high expectations in Okinawa for the new university. *“I hope that this Inauguration Ceremony will be another opportunity for each of the guests to further develop close ties with the OIST Graduate University and with Okinawa, and extend my sincere hope that the OIST Graduate University will be the driving force in stimulating science and technology innovations in Okinawa.”*

Dr. Vest concluded, *“I congratulate President Dorfan and salute the forward thinking of the people of*

Okinawa and the Japanese government on their bold and visionary establishment of this new 21st century university. OIST has been born and will be nurtured in Okinawa. It will benefit Okinawa strongly as the years progress.”

The speeches were followed by a dance performance that expressed both the strong Okinawan influence and the modern scientific mission at OIST.

Prior to the Inauguration Celebration, the first meetings of two important governing bodies of the OIST Graduate University were held; the OIST Board of Councilors on 17th November and the OIST Board of Governors on 18th November.

The agenda of the first meeting on 18th November Board of Governors meeting covered detailed reporting on all aspects of academic, financial and administrative matters at the university. Dr. Torsten Wiesel was elected as the first Chair of the OIST Board Governors and Dr. Akito Arima was elected as Vice Chair. The Board congratulated the university management on the successful completion of the accreditation process that led to the establishment of the University as from 1st November 2011. The Board highlighted OIST's successful recruitment of outstanding faculty. Dr. Wiesel commented, *“Out of 27 researcher faculty positions in the recent recruitment exercise, 25 accepted -- this level of acceptance is unheard of in the academic world.”*

On 17th November, the Board of Councilors, which is constituted of leading experts from Japan and overseas – see attached lists – and its function is to advise the university management and the Board of Governors on a wide range of managerial and academic issues. Four committees were established at the meeting;

University Management, chaired by Dr. Albrecht Wagner
Budget and Finance, chaired by Dr. Tisato Kajiyama
Academics and Research, chaired by Dr. Steven Hyman
Sustainable Development for Okinawa, chaired by Dr. Keisuke Taira

OIST President, Jonathan Dorfan summarized, *“These have been wonderful days. We had two useful and constructive first meetings of our governing bodies but above all we were able to celebrate the inauguration of OIST with our friends and supporters. I would like to thank everybody who came from Okinawa, mainland Japan and from overseas to be with us on this historic day. It marks the start of a new global model for science education.”*

INQUIRIES: OKINAWA INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GRADUATE UNIVERSITY

Kaoru Natori, Assistant Manager, Media Section Leader, Communication and PR Division
1919-1 Tancha, Onna-son, Okinawa.,904-0495 Japan Phone.+81-98-966-2389 Fax.+81-98-966-2887