

Development of Main Campus Begins



The main campus site area is approximately 70 hectares. The majority of the land is owned by Onna-son and the remainder is privately owned.

In November 2005, Onna-son voted to transfer the land to OIST as an investment in kind. OIST is still negotiating with the private land owners to acquire the remaining needed land.

Detailed design works of the main campus site and facilities are well under way. The voluntary environmental assessment from Okinawa Prefecture was completed this month.

The OIST project is generally on schedule. The construction permits and several construction contracts were settled in early March 2007. The civil work of the lab buildings, housings, tunnel and the elevators' wells for laboratory zone access will soon commence, taking great care for environmental concerns,

Concerning the project schedule after March 2007, the construction of the lab building No. 1 and the Center building will start this autumn. OIST plans for the completion of those facilities at the end of Spring 2009.

Seaside House Update

The OIST Seaside House is the first building occupied on the permanent campus site in Onna-son. It was renovated from the former Hakuun-so and opened in March 2006.

The Seaside House has become a dynamic center for courses and workshops in the OIST program. In the past year it has hosted the following international workshops and seminars:

- April 17-21, 2006, International Workshop, "Single Molecule Analysis"; 14 speakers and 32 participants
- June 26-July 6, 2006, Okinawa Computational Neuroscience Research Course; 17 speakers, 10 tutors, 38 students
- February 21-23, 2007, OIST-Korea Workshop "Neuroscience and Beyond"; 35 participants
- February 21-23, 2007, OIST Workshop on Systems Biology of Yeast Signaling; 21 participants
- March 11-15, 2007, OIST Workshop on Cognitive Neurobiology; 21 invited speakers, 1 discussant, 25 poster presentations
- March 25-29, 2007, The Second International Workshop on Cell Regulations in Division and Arrest; 31 invited speakers, 41 participants
- March 27-31, 2007, OIST Workshop "Future of Electron Microscopy"; 23 invited participants



OIST Workshop on Cognitive Neurobiology Held at Seaside House

On March 11-15, the OIST Workshop on Cognitive Neurobiology was held in Onna-son at the Seaside House. The aim of the workshop was to bring together scientists who are trying to understand the neurobiological origins of cognitive functions and exchange recent findings and explore future research directions.

The workshop featured 20 invited lectures by leading neuroscientists, including Charles Gilbert (Rockefeller Univ.), Eberhard Fetz (Univ. of Washington), Andrew Schwartz (Univ. of Pittsburgh), Barry Richmond (NIH) and 25 poster presentations by younger scientists. Remarkable progress in the localization and computational analysis of cognition was described, including in particular vision, auditory, motor systems. A major focus of the workshop was to identify new tools and resources that would facilitate research in cognitive neuroscience. New genetic tools that allow labeling and manipulation of specific types of cells in the brain could allow much finer dissection of specific signaling pathways. New methods for recording and imaging brain activity could provide deeper understanding of consciousness.

The lively discourse also covered the facility design of the new OIST campus, and the issues of animal welfare and safety. The participants also had a chance to visit the OIST research units during an excursion. All the presentations, discussions, and the research network developed from this workshop will be highly beneficial for planning for research on higher order brain function at OIST.

3rd Board of Governors Meeting Held

The Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology P.C. held the 3rd Board of Governors Meeting on December 11, 2006 at the Hotel Okura, Tokyo.

The Board of Governors appointed a new Board President. Dr. Torsten Wiesel was selected to replace the outgoing President, Dr. Kiyoshi Kurokawa. Dr. Akito Arima was elected to be co-Chair of the Board of Governors.

The Board also voted to add Dr. Tim R. Hunt (Nobel Laureate, Physiology or Medicine 2001), Dr. Yuan Tseh Lee (Nobel Laureate, Chemistry 1986) and Dr. Ichiro Kanazawa (President of Science Council of Japan) to the Board of Governors.

Other discussion topics of the meeting included: the campus master plan design and construction status, the 2007-8 fiscal year budget request, the evaluation results from the Cabinet Office Evaluation Committee and the report on scientific and academic activities.



President Sydney Brenner, Dr. Jerome Friedman, Dr. Susumu Tonegawa, Dr. Hiroko Sho, Dr. Ichiro Kanazawa (from left-to-right)

New Research Units at OIST P.C.

Developmental Neurobiology Unit (from 10.2006)



The Principal Investigator of the Developmental Neurobiology Unit is Dr. Ichiro Masai. The aim of this research unit is to elucidate the mechanisms that control cell fate decisions and tissue pattern formation during the development of multicellular organisms. Ichiro-san completed his PhD at the University of Tokyo. He later was a Post-Doc in Kings College (London) before leading the Initiative Research Unit (RIKEN) in 2001 where he investigated the underlying mechanisms for neuronal differentiation, neural circuit formation and neural functions.

Theoretical and Experimental Neurobiology Unit (from 11.2006)



The Principal Investigator of the Theoretical and Experimental Neurobiology Unit is Dr. Klaus Stiefel. The core aim of this research unit explores the structure-function relationship of neurons. Klaus completed his PhD, under the supervision of Pr. Wolf Singer, at the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research (Frankfurt/Main, DE). Klaus was most recently with the Computational Neurobiology Lab of Dr. Terry Sejnowski (Salk Institute, La Jolla, CA) that researched neuronal function under non-stationary condition.

Brain Mechanisms for Behaviour Unit (from 01.2007)



The Principal Investigator of the Brain Mechanisms for Behaviour Unit is Dr. Gordon Arbuthnott. The core aim of this research unit is to understand, at the systems neuroscience level, the mechanisms that allow the brain to control behavioural responses. Gordon completed his PhD at the University of Aberdeen (UK). Gordon completed his PhD at the University of Aberdeen (UK). He spent most of his research career in the UK Medical Research Council 'Brain Metabolism Unit' in Edinburgh examining the brain mechanisms involved in Schizophrenia. At OIST he will combine his interests in the neurophysiology of the brain areas involved in Parkinson's disease in collaboration with the Neurobiology Research Unit and Human Developmental Neurobiology Unit in particular.

Human Developmental Neurobiology Unit (from 01.2007)



The Principal Investigator of the Human Developmental Neurobiology Unit is Dr. Gail Tripp. The aims of this unit are to clarify the nature and extent of altered sensitivity to reinforcement in children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and to elucidate the neurobiological basis for this altered sensitivity. Gail completed her PhD and postgraduate training in Clinical Psychology at the Univ. of Otago (NZ) where she later established and directed the ADHD Research Clinic. Gail was the first Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Behavioural Research (Univ. of Georgia, USA) and a Fellow at the Centre for Advanced Study at the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters.

Neurobiology Research Unit (from 01.2007)



The Principal Investigator of the Neurobiology Research Unit is Dr. Jeff Wickens. The overall aim of this research is to advance understanding of the brain mechanisms underlying learning, and how these are involved in neurological and behavioural disorders. Jeff completed a medical degree and a PhD at the Univ. of Otago. He has made widely recognised contributions towards understanding the mechanism of learning, by demonstrating physical changes in neural connections brought about by reward. He holds a Personal Chair at the University of Otago, has been a visiting Professor in the UK and USA, and a Fellow of the Centre for Advanced Study at the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters.