



OIST

OIST Press Release

OKINAWA INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GRADUATE UNIVERSITY

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New Science and Technology Graduate University in Okinawa

Following the approval by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) of the establishment of Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST) both as the School Corporation and the OIST Graduate University, the Japanese Government led by Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda today approved that the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology School Corporation Act will enter into effect. As of November 1, 2011 a new science and technology graduate university (OIST School Corporation) will exist in Okinawa.

OIST Graduate University President-elect Jonathan Dorfan expressed his satisfaction. *“This is a historic day for education and research. I would like to acknowledge the outstanding vision of the Japanese government for setting up a new model of education that can transform graduate studies globally. The OIST Graduate University will conduct internationally outstanding research and education, thereby contributing centrally to the sustainable development of Okinawa.”*

At least half of the OIST Graduate University faculty and students will be recruited from outside Japan, and all education and research is conducted entirely in English. About forty-five world-class faculty in the life, physical and environmental sciences have already joined. The absence of academic departments, the strong emphasis on common research tools and the imaginative layout of the research space, provide a natural home for truly inter-disciplinary research. Each year, starting in September 2012, about twenty graduate students, selected from amongst the best available worldwide, will begin their studies at OIST. While the curriculum will provide the students with a strong grounding in their core discipline, courses will also be required to extend their discipline-specific knowledge in ways that promote cross-disciplinary research.

“I am delighted by the decision to approve the establishment of OIST,” said Akito Arima, Co Chair of the OIST Board of Governors. *“The OIST Graduate University can set new standards of excellence in international science education. Japan can become a global leader in this field.”*

INQUIRIES: OKINAWA INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GRADUATE UNIVERSITY

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One of the key objectives in creating the OIST Graduate University is to contribute to the promotion and self-sustaining development of Okinawa. The combination of highly imaginative academic minds and sophisticated research infrastructure will generate scientific breakthroughs in diverse areas, which will be the driving force for innovation and technology development on Okinawa.

“OIST with its international and interdisciplinary approach has a capacity to extend the boundaries of science beyond measure at this point of time,” commented Torsten Wiesel, Co Chair of the OIST Board of Governors. *“We are now engaged in the process of setting up an R&D Cluster on Okinawa to accelerate the transfer of scientific innovation to commercial exploitation.”*

History

In 2001, the Minister of Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs, and Science and Technology Policy, announced the plan to establish an international graduate university in Okinawa. In May 2002, former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi pledged that the Japanese government would promote the project to establish the new graduate university in Okinawa at the 30th anniversary ceremony marking the reversion of Okinawa to Japan. Two years later, it was decided that the university will be located in Onna and four research proposals were selected in order to form the Initial Research Project (IRP), which started in Uruma in 2004. The Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Promotion Corporation (OIST P.C.) was established on September 1, 2005, after the Diet of Japan approved the OIST P.C. Act (Act No. 26 of 2005) in March 2005. The promotion corporation was established in order to prepare the way for an international graduate university. Nobel Laureate Sydney Brenner was appointed first president of OIST P.C. in August of the same year. In September 2007, Dr. Robert Baughman was appointed Vice President and Executive Director. Following the successful establishment and operation of OIST P.C., the Diet of Japan passed the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology School Corporation (S.C.) Act in Summer 2009, thereby providing the institutional basis for the University and establishing a framework for transitioning from a research institute to a fully functioning graduate university. The OIST S.C. Act was enacted on July 10, 2009. From the perspective of respecting the autonomy and the management flexibility of the school, the Act stipulates the establishment of the graduate university as an independent special school corporation. Based on the Act, the graduate university submitted an application to the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in March 2011, which was approved in October 2011. As of November 1, 2011, the OIST School Corporation will be established after the OIST S.C. Act entered into effect.