

President Toshio HIRANO's 2013 New Year's Greeting

First of all, I'd like to wish all of you a Happy New Year! In my New Year's greeting on January 4, 2012, I spoke about my first dream of that new year — that in 2031, Osaka University would celebrate its 100th anniversary as one of the top ten universities in the world. A year has passed since then. Lots of things have happened and I have begun to think that my dream of the year now past would actually come true, that we need only to work hard to make it come true.

Some years ago, YAMAMURA Yuichi, the 11th president of Osaka University, gave me a paperboard with the following calligraphy written on it:

*“Even though the tallest tree cannot touch the sky,
strive to grow and touch it!”*

Dreams cannot be achieved easily. We may even think that it's impossible to have a dream come true. Of course, this impossibility is why we call a dream a dream. However, if you hold on to your dream and make every effort to achieve it, one day, someday, that dream just might come true. I have led my life believing this.

Universities are centers of learning and scholarship. Universities themselves are a source of the future and possess the power to influence the future. Universities must cultivate this power and contribute to the world in order to create a spiritually rich and peaceful society. It goes without saying that the individual members of a university community are the driving force behind a university's operations and that education and research organizations, full of such individuals, are equally vital for a university's development. In that sense, it is clear that the uniqueness and autonomy of each education and research organization are crucial to this driving force. Thus, the development of Osaka University requires efforts in education and research by each of its schools and institutions.

I'd like to express my gratitude to all of you for doing your best last year toward going a step further in research, education, and management from a global viewpoint under the leadership of the deans and directors. This year I know you will keep up the good work. I believe that when you share the dream of Osaka University being ranked among the top ten research universities in the world and meld your wisdom and power, surely this dream can be realized.

Last year Japan and Japanese universities faced difficult challenges. Universities suffered a cut in subsidies from the national government and staff salaries were reduced. However, despite such difficulties, the Center for Information and Neural Networks will be completed as scheduled in March and the Advanced Medical Treatment Center will be finished a year from now, in March 2014. Moreover, construction on the Comprehensive Research Building for Science and Liberal Arts as well as the Biosystem Dynamics Research Building will start soon.

Last year, three of our Leading Programs in Doctoral Education were adopted. Together with the two programs that were adopted two years ago, five leading programs are now under way at Osaka University. The University of Tokyo has six leading programs; Osaka University follows with five.

In May last year, Osaka University finalized the document “Osaka University Academic Initiatives for 2012~2015 — to be a university that shines forth even into the 22nd century.” Within that document, we compiled eight principles that we have termed “Osaka University Academic Initiatives.” With leadership from the Institute for Academic Initiatives, five education advancement groups and one research advancement group have already begun cross-boundary disciplinary activities.

Additionally, the decision was made to integrate indirect expenses, donations, joint research funds, and hospital income and reallocate them from the 2013-14 academic year. Thanks to this reallocation of resources, a system for assisting researchers in obtaining research funds, including indirect expenditures, has been established. This is one of the new financial measures we have put in place to support basic research. This is also an incentive for individual researchers. Furthermore, one of our basic policies now concerns using part of the resources obtained from collaboration with society and industry and hospital activities for Osaka University university-wide development. Such measures are revolutionary and ahead of other universities and become a driving force for further development at Osaka University.

Furthermore, beginning in the coming fiscal year, we are introducing, ahead of other universities, measures for dealing with aging facilities. Furthermore, the traditional office system has been replaced with a new trustee assistance system. Also, a governance system has been established enabling smooth information sharing, opinion exchange, and collaboration between the headquarters and each education and research organization. Thanks to you we were able to introduce such advanced systems and policies. These are products of the wisdom of our personnel and their enthusiasm for the further advancement of Osaka University. In this way, OU faculty and staff members have enabled a good start toward the 100th anniversary goal. For this, I’d like to express my sincere respect and gratitude to all of you.

In order to achieve our dreams this year, it will be necessary to coalesce the wisdom of all OU community members, alumni, and other university-related people. Let me explain our plans for 2013, to elaborate on what we will do this year item by item — in education, research, securing human resources, allocating resources, securing new financial sources, public relations, and environment improvement.

1. Education and international strategies

Osaka University aims to achieve an environment where outstanding Japanese and international students understand each other’s culture and improve themselves by learning from others. Currently, international students account for 14 percent of all graduate school students, but only 2 percent of undergraduate students. Osaka University Academic Initiatives

aim to increase the percentage of international undergraduates to 10 percent.

In addition to the English curriculum and programs inaugurated in October 2010, from the autumn of 2014, Osaka University will start a new Japanese language course in order to recruit outstanding overseas students. In this course, international students will study Japanese language from the autumn for six months as a preparatory program for courses in April of the following year at which time some of their classes will be with Japanese freshmen.

Additionally, in order to double the number of international students, we're examining short-term student exchange programs for courses and programs conducted totally in English.

We will encourage education and research organizations to increase the number of international students they take and support such programs aggressively. I hope that in six years, international students will account for some 10 percent of all students and the number of international students in long-term programs will exceed 10 percent by the 2020s.

We will also open up all-English courses to Japanese students as well, and increase the number of classes in English. Additionally, we will improve summer language programs for students in the first and second years, promoting student overseas study and research. Likewise, we will encourage education and research organizations to implement such programs and will support such programs aggressively.

In order to accept international students and encourage Japanese students to study abroad, we will improve the functioning of the Support Office for International Students and Scholars and promote avenues of financial support from Osaka University Future Funds.

Osaka University is involved in international exchange at the university, school, and individual researcher levels. We have also been actively involved in overseas alumni reunions. Information on such exchange activities has been collected and analyzed and will be helpful when accepting international students and promoting study abroad and researcher exchange. Coordination among administration, education and research organizations, faculty and staff, as well as students is crucial in promoting the internationalization of Osaka University.

We will support education and research organizations promoting globalization in various ways. This year, we are revising our international strategy and constructing a strong support system for it. Additionally, we will further promote public relations targeting high school students so that outstanding Japanese high school students will enroll in Osaka University with a clear sense of purpose.

Last year, Osaka University signed agreements with ten high schools cultivating college-bound students in Osaka Prefecture and we embarked on public relations activities at those schools. The trustees and I visited these high schools, providing classes and explanatory sessions. This year we will facilitate further public relations. Please maintain relationships you have with high schools through friends and people you know.

2. Research and Human Resources

At the end of last year, we established an Innovative Drug Development Research Group as

one of the Education and Research Promotion Groups of the Institute for Academic Initiatives. This year, we will launch further research groups in areas of Osaka University's strengths, promoting the development of cross-boundary disciplinary research fields. Additionally, we will set up a strategy-planning group at the Initiative Planning Office to investigate future initiatives. Moreover, in order to improve the academic environment, we will aim to create more opportunities where researchers and students in various fields and schools can engage in spontaneous exchange. To this end, we will invite topnotch lecturers from OU and outside and hold events we are tentatively calling "Osaka University Future Talks" for OU community members.

Furthermore, in order to improve faculty diversity and globalization of undergraduate and graduate education, we plan to set up a program tentatively titled "Faculty Member Appointment Globalization Program." In this program, Osaka University will grant funds to education and research organizations for the improvement of the education and research environment on the condition they hire researchers as professors. There will be two conditions: the researchers must have a doctorate from an internationally recognized university and must have achieved some sort of world-class achievement. We are also planning an "Osaka University Special Professor System" that I'll talk about later. Finally, in order to nurture promising young researchers, we will also introduce a tenure track system in all education and research organizations.

I think this year will become a milestone for Osaka University, that our research conducted in close cooperation with industry and society will enter a new phase. Universities must not only promote basic research, but also contribute to society through their "wisdom," human resources, intellectual property, and advanced medical treatment. In this sense, university-industry and university-society collaboration and advanced medical treatment are important social contributions that institutions such as OU must fulfill. Also, universities can provide human resource development by taking the viewpoint of companies and society into consideration.

Furthermore, we have an important role to play in the development of the university as a whole through the reallocation of joint research grants from the government, donations, and hospital income. To achieve such, we must demonstrate that high-level research is being conducted, research that will attract companies and society and that outstanding researchers and students are active at the university. This year, in order to further develop university-industry collaboration activities and advanced medical treatment, we will promote reform and improvement by introducing a new management systems and easing conventional framework regulations.

We will aggressively promote basic research that only universities can provide and share our achievements with society through university-industry collaboration and advanced medical treatment. And we will reinvest a portion of the achievements in basic research. Basic

research is a seed from the crop for future planting. Through such a cycle, we will lay out the path to self-reliance and future development.

3. Securing outstanding faculty and staff members

The most important element in Osaka University's shining as one of the outstanding universities in the world is personnel. Human resources are a first and foremost resource. Attracting outstanding faculty and staff from all over the world is very important. I'd like to take the initiative in supporting the efforts by each education and research organization to secure outstanding personnel.

As part of such initiatives, I will allocate funds for 20 percent of all indirect costs for personnel. In addition to that, we will seek to obtain research funds and improve research institutes and facilities as well as improve the physical and psychological environment so that researchers can concentrate on their research. Furthermore, as a way of providing special treatment in order to attract researchers who have world-class achievements to Osaka University, we will establish a "Faculty Member Globalization Appointment Program." Moreover, we will give a special title to researchers achieving excellent results, such as "Osaka University Special Professors" and improve the situation surrounding their employment. In addition to this program, we're examining the establishment of a system to recognize researchers awarded competitive funds such as Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research and those awarded significant indirect expenses.

Needless to say, not only faculty members, but also staff members who make contributions to Osaka University's development will be recognized. Particularly since our legal status became that of a national university corporation, staff members' contributions to university management have been highly regarded. Likewise, support for faculty members conducting education and research has taken on new importance.

In addition to staff members' job performance appraisal at each education and research organization, the Project Management Team (PMT), within the Osaka University Academic Initiative, nurtures personnel who, from the viewpoint of the university as a whole, voluntarily conduct broad perspective work. Focusing on these approaches, we aim to become a more flexible and vibrant organization.

Furthermore, we are also examining the improvement of incentive schemes for individuals who achieved excellent results. Examples include enhancing operation efficiency at education and research organizations and facilitating globalization as well as approaches for achieving OU goals under the Osaka University Academic Initiatives, not to mention budget allocation for clerical work at the office manager's discretion.

4. Reconstruction of human resource allocation

Last year, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology announced the university reform implementation plan. They came up with the idea to promote university reform by focusing on two points: revising university functions and improving and

strengthening university governance. Likewise, the government has established a policy on implementing clear resource allocation, urging budget allocation that places an emphasis on priority areas at the president's discretion. However, although we make efforts to allocate resources, with subsidies from the government being cut by 1 ~ 1.6% every year, it becomes more and more difficult.

In such a setting, concerning the allocation of resources for retained positions, we need to increase personnel involved in basic university management due to the necessity of coping with issues like harassment and providing support for students needing special care mentally or physically. Regarding faculty member positions, the decision to adopt the 90 percent rule was made in 2006. The 90 percent rule specifies that 90 percent of the budget an education or research organization can be used by them, but 10 percent of the budget must be designated for the university as a whole. The 90 percent rule produces a reserve that the university can use. Thus, we'd like to start examining detailed measures to support efforts for using that money. We are now examining a system to evaluate, for example, operation management, globalization of office work, education, and research at each organization, and approaches for promoting higher-level education and research and to allocate additional resources to organization receiving superior evaluations as a "manager's discretionary budget" or "dean's discretionary budget."

5. Securing new financial resources

Subsidies from the government for 2012 are about 50.4 billion yen and account for about 36 percent of the university's recurring income. The subsidies from the government occupy a major position in university income as a stable income resource, but they are being reduced by 1.3 percent annually. From the government's viewpoint, such reductions will be offset by effective reform. The reduction of government subsidies is expected to continue for years to come. As long as we depend on subsidies from the government, it'll be difficult to make a great development in education and research on our own.

It goes without saying that we should make every effort to obtain outside funds such as Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research in order to secure our own financial resources. I've already mentioned that we must invest a portion of income gained from university-industry and university-society collaboration businesses and hospital income on the future of Osaka University as a whole.

In addition to income, we need to increase the money available from Osaka University Future Funds. Osaka University Future Funds had collected about 2.5 billion yen by December 2012. However, that amount is not enough to develop programs such as supporting student study abroad, providing financial support for international students, or developing young researchers.

I'd like to increase the amount of money in the Osaka University Future Funds to at least 10 billion yen in next 10 years. If 100,000 Osaka University affiliated individuals donate

10,000 yen a year for 10 years, the total amount of money would total 10 billion yen. This is about 800 yen a month, or about 27 yen a day. Why not join us in reaching for the goal of being one of the top 10 universities in the world by the 100th Anniversary? Share your wisdom and donate to the Future Funds.

6. University's Public Relations and Improvement of Environment

In order to share Osaka University's basic stance with society and the nation and achieve Osaka University Academic Initiatives, we will strengthen public relations and university-society activities toward the world as a comprehensive research university. As a key player in disseminating information, Osaka University's website will improve its content and speed up the delivery of information to users. Furthermore, we will improve public relations by making better use of the website and printed materials such as the newsletter. We will hire talented young faculty and staff members and introduce them to society through public relations activities while promoting close cooperation with university alumni.

Osaka University has held lectures such as "Tekijuku Workshops," "Kaitokudo for the 21st Century courses," "SHIBA Ryotaro memorial lectures." These lectures will be held under the name of Osaka University Symposium in order to establish the Osaka University brand name. To this end, Osaka University will use the Nakanoshima Center as an important base for public relations and university-society collaboration. Tekijuku is an asset that must be preserved as one of the roots of Osaka University.

This year marks the 175th anniversary of Tekijuku's founding and the 150th anniversary of OGATA Koan's death. We will further emphasize the importance of Tekijuku as a symbol of Osaka University brand. In order to strategically develop Osaka University's public relations, in cooperation with specialists who can provide the president and trustees with professional advice, public relations staff members will work on disseminating more information on what is happening.

Also, regarding Osaka University's lands and buildings such as the Nakanoshima Center, Minoh campus, housing for faculty and staff, and student dormitories, we will clarify their future roles.

Furthermore, we will focus on the improvement of extra-curricular activity and welfare facilities to improve student life. This year, we will start work on the improvement of locker rooms and a circle building on the playing field at the Toyonaka campus, renovation of the playing field on the Suita campus, and welfare facilities on the Suita and Toyonaka campuses.

In the Faculty of Medicine, School of Dentistry, and both University Hospitals, smoking has been banned. I think now it's time to declare a total ban on smoking in all areas of the Osaka University campuses.

Osaka University is supported by individual community members. We will improve the systems for the mental and physical support of students, faculty, and staff members. That is, we will improve environments in both wellness and amenity aspects so that students can

concentrate on learning and extracurricular activities while faculty and staff members concentrate on education, research, and organizational operation.

Finally, I'd like to talk about risk management, safety management, and harassment. It's only to be expected that university people have a high sense of ethics and responsibility. I strongly ask you to discipline yourselves, avoid inappropriate behavior as university people. We will continue to respond harshly to misconduct.

7. At the end of my greetings, I have something to say.

A dream cannot be achieved easily and that's why it is a dream, an ideal. If we stop pursuing our dreams because they are hard to realize, dreams will just remain dreams. For our university to develop, OU community members need to share the university's dream and mission and contribute their wisdom and power in order to realize that dream. To this end, a dialogue between the administration and OU members is important. Last year, we made efforts to have opportunities for discussion between faculty and staff members and the president and trustees as much as possible. Also this year, I want to increase opportunities for the active exchange of opinions between the president and executive and OU community members. Let us resolve that we will work together to make Osaka University one of the world's top 10 research universities by our 100th anniversary. To achieve this goal, we need to answer the following five questions.

- (1) How can we achieve world-leading research at Osaka University?
- (2) How can we nurture outstanding personnel and share them with the world?
- (3) How can attract outstanding students from all over the world?
- (4) How can attract outstanding faculty and staff from all over the world?
- (5) How can we secure our financial resources?

Not only administration officers, deans, management personnel at the Administration Bureau and education and research organizations, but all OU members must try to answer these questions. For Osaka University to develop steadily toward the future, we must drastically change at times and at other times we must consider carefully, review university management, and map out development strategies for education and research.

Together we can achieve our goals with your wisdom and power.

In closing, I wish for your continued good health and success. Thank you very much.

January 7, 2013

Toshio Hirano

President

Osaka University