

New Year's Message 2016

OU Vision 2021

1. Introduction

I would like to wish all of you a Happy New Year. I hope that you all began your 2016 with a fresh mind. This will be my first New Year's speech since I assumed my post as President of Osaka University.

First, there have been events which we must all address. It is extremely regrettable that there were incidences of malpractice at the university last year – namely the unauthorized use of grants for scientific research, improper accounting, and leakage of personal information. It is quite regretful that I, as president, must tell you about these things in my New Year's greeting.

In particular, the unauthorized use of research funds, tax payers' money, damages the public's trust in and expectations of universities, and it may also shake the foundation of our nation's academic research. With recognition of such, we've formulated a stricter code of conduct about the use of public research funds and made efforts to prevent unauthorized use of research funds.

In spite of such efforts, we once again experienced unauthorized use of research funds. We must accept this fact with sincerity and show society through our actions our determination to no longer tolerate unauthorized use of research funds. We must make efforts to eradicate the unauthorized use of research funds and restore our damaged credibility.

As one of the concrete preventive measures for this malpractice, we will introduce account processing systems with a strict checking system and familiarize all faculty and staff members with this system to make sure that it is implemented. In addition to that, we will thoroughly implement education activities in order for OU members to have a sense of compliance. We will take radical measures by using physical means and raising awareness of workers in order to ensure the prevention of unauthorized use.

In order to eradicate this malpractice, first and foremost, each OU member must be aware of the severity of unauthorized use. We must sternly reexamine ourselves and make efforts to restore the public's trust.

2. Ensuring the implementation of renovation efforts

Times are drastically changing. As symbolized by the plan for reducing operating grants proposed by the Fiscal System Council in October 2015, the university

environment has become quite severe. In addition, just like fast-moving world politics and economy, the move toward innovation is accelerating in the academic world as well. However, we should not get lazy about pursuing the truth. We are required to do more with limited resources. If I were to say, we have to admit that we have reached a point that we can neither be content with our present situation nor follow conventional patterns.

Even in such a setting, I've not once forgotten my goal of "Building a firm foundation for Osaka University through connecting the true worth of each individual with the evolution of Osaka University," which I expressed in my policy speech when I ran for the presidency. At the beginning of this year, I'd like to keep this original intention in my heart. Now I renew my determination to follow through with this intention during my 6-year term.

In my policy speech, I pledged to make a quick review of reform based on campus-wide consensus as part of our renovation efforts. I also promised to make positive proposals and carry them out according to 5 basic principles.

I've already carried out various renovation efforts such as restructuring of the "Office System," reviewing of policies on pay revision for staff members aged 64 and 65 in exchange for an extension in retirement age, and the continuation of a comprehensive contract with electronic journal of Springer Publishing Company. Additionally, we're steadily proceeding with the Top Global University Project Initiative in order to make the system for university globalization a solid platform. In particular, with regret that campus-wide consensus was not reached about application procedures, we will once again hold campus-wide discussions about the school calendar, measures for increasing the number of international students, and innovation of English education.

Regarding positive proposals of innovation and their implementation, "OU Vision 2021" is being drafted. With your agreement, I'd like to finalize the plan within this and actively push it forward.

3. OU Vision 2021

From this April, national university corporations will enter the third mid-term goals period. In this time of expanding globalization, our university, based in Osaka, needs to play a more significant role in cultivating human resources responsible for the next generation as a center of education with more competitiveness.

Under such circumstances, we will actively work on the new development of measures and policies on higher education including the Specified Research University System, which is planned by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and

Technology (MEXT) and temporarily renamed as the Specified National Corporation System, as well as the adoption of prominent graduate schools and prominent researchers. In particular, Osaka University has been involved in the Specified National Corporation System from the system planning stage as a front runner of university reform in Japan, and we are committed to playing this leading role. Your cooperation in preparing for application for these new systems is greatly appreciated.

As innovation for efficiently performing applications for these new national systems, the university leadership is now drafting “OU Vision 2021,” a 6-year vision focused on 2021, the final year of the third mid-term goals period, based on the basic principles of the Osaka University Charter. The keyword for this vision is “Openness.”

Why is innovation making such little progress in Japan? I attribute this to a thick “wall” between the inside and outside of the organization as well as between small communities inside this wall. Therefore, I’m creating a vision based on “Openness,” which means getting rid of walls between departments on campus and walls separating the inside and outside of the university, and opening scholarship at university to society. Specifically, the vision focuses on 5 pillars: Open Education, Open Science, Open Innovation, Open Community, and Open Governance. Based on these pillars, we will revolutionize ourselves and evolve the university into an established comprehensive research university with the aim of creating a place where all OU members can form an orchestration of knowledge and co-create this knowledge together.

Now, allow me to elaborate about what I would like to accomplish regarding these 5 pillars.

3-1. Open Education

My basic stance of education is to affirm the fundamental perspective that universities are educational institutions and to reestablish the reputation that Osaka University is an “educational university.”

For this purpose, we should not forget about general education and advanced education in the liberal arts. Moving forward, we will further strengthen university-wide general education, reaffirm “university-wide commitment,” and continue to flesh out general education. Other universities have also been proactively strengthening general education and liberal arts education at the undergraduate and graduate levels, but this movement was actually something that Osaka University took the initiative to start. I once again ask for the cooperation of all departments in order to formulate a university-wide system of liberal arts education to lead Japan.

It is the mission of Osaka University to respond to the mandate of cultivating competent human resources while performing intense research in all fields. Above all, because I feel that the enhancement of graduate school education is the way to answer the demands of society, I intend to reexamine graduate school education here at OU.

At Osaka University, we have implemented five Programs for Leading Graduate Schools. Our biggest challenge is to propagate these results across the entirety of education in the graduate schools at OU. These programs should be seen as a model for graduate school education in the future, so we should not let them end as something merely temporary. Rather, we should use these programs to provide a spark for current graduate school reform. So, I ask the entire university to continue to support these programs even after support from MEXT has come to a close.

Second, in order to realize graduate school education that will answer societal demands, we will begin discussions on a liberal arts degree program focusing on humane studies and social sciences.

Specialized education in current graduate schools alone is thought to be not enough to answer growing demands from society and students, so graduate minor programs are provided in order to make up for this deficit. I think that it is important to flesh out these endeavors as degree programs through proper evaluation and arrangement.

Third, I would like to thrash out all problem areas by aggregating the problems of each graduate school and aligning them with a comprehensive view of graduate school education at Osaka University. Currently, more and more students are straying away from advancing to graduate school. The weakening of graduate school research and education at Osaka University will directly lead to the weakening of Japan's research ability as a whole, which is a serious problem. I would like to work directly with those graduate schools which have seen a decrease in competitiveness to come up with a solution for this issue.

I believe that through taking on these challenges, we will see a path to both the framework of a prominent graduate school and a response to the designated national university corporation system.

3-2. Open Science

The data obtained in various research fields has increased exponentially and continues to become both multilayered and multidimensional, with instrumental data approaching the exabyte, or 1×10^{18} bytes. Without high level integrated use of this big data, we cannot expect the creation of intellectual value or the construction of societal and economic worth through new scientific discoveries.

On a related note, the Abe administration has put out the “Declaration to be the World’s Most Advanced IT Nation,” and in it, they mentioned that Japan will become the world’s most advanced big data society within about 5 years. Additionally, in the Fifth Science and Technology Basic Plan, the administration mentions the realization of a “Super Smart Society” which will utilize artificial intelligence and big data technology to enrich the lives of the people, as well as create future industry, services, and business based on new value.

So I would like to take the initiative to gather the intelligence science and technology at Osaka University and establish the “Institute for Datability Science.” At this institute, big data obtained through experiments and simulations in every academic discipline at Osaka University will be gathered to construct a platform in which high level integrated use of this data can take place. By intersecting data from different fields on this platform and integrating knowledge, it will become possible to create knowledge in new areas of integrated research. Furthermore, based on evidence data, by fostering interdisciplinary research, including ethical, legal, and economic issues found in humane studies and social sciences that occur on the contact point between science technology and society, I want to formulate a hub that can embody this “Open Science.”

The implementation of this interdisciplinary research will surely be useful to learn new research methods as a kind of “on the job training” in the cultivation of young researchers and students who will carry the burden of the next generation.

I believe that this framework is the first step for all researchers at Osaka University toward the creation of new science innovation and will lead to the strengthening of research literacy of the entire university, and I hope for its swift implementation.

3-3. Open Innovation

Last September, Thomson Reuters ranked Osaka University 18th in the world and 1st in Asia in their Top 100 Innovative Universities. Osaka University powerfully advances collaboration between university and industry with the confidence of being a top class innovative university on a global scale.

As part of this, under the concept of “From Collaboration to Co-Creation,” we aim for innovation which leads to the creation of new societal worth.

That is to say, in addition to pre-existing industry-university collaboration centered on technical research and development, Osaka University will continue to unflinchingly challenge the realization of a university which gives birth to “industry-university co-creation” through various ways of co-creation: organizational co-creation

traversing different industries and fields, co-creation through gender cooperation, co-creation which transcends the walls between natural sciences and humane studies/social sciences, co-creation to connect basic research with practical application, and co-creation of technology and services.

And we should not forget that at the base of industry-university co-creation is, after all, people; that is, human resources. The lively activity of participants and the mutual exchange of a wealth of ability, ideas, and emotions will lead to the creation of societal worth, in other words, “innovation.”

Through Osaka University-style industry-university co-creation and under the motto of “Shifting focus from ‘how to do’ to ‘what to do,’” Osaka University will continue to produce human resources that can conceive what truly must be done in the world today, and further advance the cycle of people and worth between society and university.

3-4. Open Community

The Equal Employment Opportunity Law has been in place for exactly 30 years as of this year, and April 1st marks the full-scale implementation of the Law to Promote Women in the Workplace.

At Osaka University, starting with the preparation of on-campus daycare centers, we have advanced support for faculty and staff members to balance both work and life, providing work and research environments in which each and every individuals can exhibit the full potential of their individuality and ability, no matter the lifestyle. The percentage of female employees at the university was 13.9% as of May of last year, but due to the need to enhance gender equal education and research activity, we plan to found the Center for the Promotion of Gender Cooperation (a temporary name) on April 1st of this year.

I do not wish to delay in our endeavors for gender cooperation in academic fields. In order to create new knowledge as well, we will use this center as a hub for female faculty and staff to fully realize their abilities, as well as work toward the realization of a flexible, open community in which everyone can exchange a wide variety of knowledge.

Additionally, as an open community that works in harmony with citizens and society, Osaka University must also continue to be an entity which crosses national borders and is always closely connected with global society.

At OU, we have continuously performed exchange and collaborative research with universities and advanced research institutes from countries all over the world, and

there is an active flow of outstanding students and researchers from both Japan and overseas. In order to smoothly and dynamically advance this set of circumstances in the future, we will facilitate functional enhancement by establishing the International Division in the Administration Bureau in April of this year. We will also perform structural streamlining such as the functional enhancement of overseas centers.

At the same time, we cannot deny the reality of the danger and risk factors overseas epitomized by the simultaneous terrorist attacks which took place in Paris last November, so we here at Osaka University intends to strengthen the mechanisms for responding to risk and danger associated with the globalization of the university.

3-5. Open Governance

As reflected in the strict national finances of the Japanese government, operating grants, which form the fundamental budget of national universities, have been severely reduced since becoming incorporated in 2004. In this period, this reduction at Osaka University has reached 10.4 billion yen, a 19% decrease. And during the third mid-term goal period starting this April, it is predicted that the difficult circumstances involving operating grants will continue. But even in circumstances like these, we have a responsibility to exercise our ingenuity and improve the quality and energy in our education, research, and contributions to society. For this purpose, we will continue to strive toward the realization of university management based on the middle- to long-term fiscal vision over the six years of the third mid-term goal period.

Specifically, by communicating the 6 year fiscal outlook starting in April of this year, we will aim for comprehensive and strategic university management from a middle- to long-term viewpoint without being bound to short term perspective on a year-to-year basis.

For example, as new measures regarding budget distribution within the university to further support the education, research, and societal contributions of each department, we aim to found the “budget adjustment system” (name still tentative), a mechanism which performs adjustments of budget distribution over the course of multiple years in response to the middle- to long-term fiscal outlook of each department. We are currently exploring the possibility of the realization of this “budget adjustment system,” but once verified, we plan to apply this system to internal budget distribution of the 2016-2017 academic year and forward.

These measures would be a pioneering endeavor, as this could very well make Osaka University the first national university to realize effective accounting for multiple years, even within the framework of the existing accounting of a single year. This

challenge is expected to have its troubles, but this is a new attempt which makes use of the advantage of scale characteristic of a large-scale comprehensive university, so we must move forward for the sake of this challenge.

In order to implement these important measures for “OU Vision 2021,” we will establish two new divisions to streamline the organization in the Administration Bureau and perform necessary consolidation. One of those, which I mentioned just a few minutes ago, is the International Department. The other is the Department of Planning for strengthening the function of designing university’s important policies, which will contribute to the strengthening of the part of Open Governance.

However, the change of positions in the Administration Bureau associated with this structural streamlining will be performed by transferring resources, so I will tell you that this streamlining will not be accompanied by an increase in staff.

4. The Redevelopment of the Nakanoshima Campus

The area around Nakanoshima 4-chome, Kita-ku, Osaka City, the birthplace of Osaka Imperial University, is the original site of the Faculty of Medicine, School of Dentistry, and School of Science. As part of the 70th anniversary of the founding of Osaka University, the Osaka University Nakanoshima Center was opened in April of 2004, and now it is used as a hub for university-community collaboration as the Osaka University Nakanoshima Campus.

The Nakanoshima area has been the center of economy, culture, and government in Osaka for a long time. In particular, the Nakanoshima 4-chome area has been positioned as a communications hub for academia, culture, and the arts, and the establishment of a new art museum is being planned by Osaka City. In addition to the already established Osaka Science Museum and the National Museum of Art, Osaka, Osaka City plans to build a new museum. This area is also important as an area included in the plans for the new Naniwasuji Line of West Japan Railway Company (JR West).

So, I’m currently formulating the “Nakanoshima Agora” concept, which will make the OU’s Nakanoshima Campus, with the Nakanoshima Center at its core, a communications hub for various arts as well as a hub for industry-university collaboration through the cooperation of a significant number of departments and fields at the university.

It is my desire to work hand in hand with businesses and organizations that perform their work on Nakanoshima and actively deliver not only academics and research from

Osaka, but also the pulse of Osaka's culture and arts to contribute to the liveliness of the inner city.

So as part of the 90th anniversary of the founding of Osaka University in 2021, we have developed the "Osaka University Nakanoshima Campus Redevelopment Project" which will make effective use of this area on the middle- to long-term, with an Osaka University Foundation for the Future already in place for this project.

I feel that the redevelopment of the Osaka University Nakanoshima Campus will contribute not only to the development of Osaka University, but to the development of Osaka City and Osaka Prefecture as well. I want to ask for your enthusiastic support in promoting the redevelopment and reuse of Nakanoshima while recognizing the important role played by Osaka University in the region of Osaka.

5. In closing

I realize that I spoke about a somber topic at the beginning of my speech, but I'm sure that Osaka University possesses the wisdom to turn those negatives into positives and the will to overcome.

I've received a lot of strength from watching the NHK serial TV drama "Asa ga kita," which began last October. The model for this show, HIROOKA Asako, took the saying "always rising after a fall" to a whole new level. As one of the founders of Daido Life Insurance Company, Ms. Hirooka also undertook great efforts to found ~~the~~ the Japan Women's University.

I'm touched by her cheerfulness, energy, and courage. Various other figures related to Osaka also make appearances, such as GODAI Tomoatsu, and FUKUZAWA Yukichi who studied at Tekijuku, but each character is optimistic and possesses the inner fortitude to be downhearted over problems that may arise. Osaka has always been full of vivacity, and this show has allowed me to feel this once again.

Osaka University was founded in 1931, as the product of the economic and financial community of Osaka at the time, the financial supports of the citizens of Osaka City and the whole of Osaka Prefecture, and, more than anything, powerful ambition.

Also, Osaka University of Foreign Studies, which merged with Osaka University in 2007, was founded through donations by HAYASHI Takesaburo and his wife Choko, business owners who made their fortune through the maritime industry.

Osaka is remarkable in that it has cultivated schools and universities established by the government through efforts by the general public for the purpose of facilitating education and cultivation of human resources.

Beginning with the Nakanoshima Redevelopment Project, I'm seriously considering

the ways Osaka University can give back to the people who have shown it so much support.

In this sense, I want to make this first year of my term as president of Osaka University into one in which we think together about how we can take action to give back to the area, and I'd like to move ahead one step at a time.

Finally, in 2021, Osaka University will celebrate the 90th anniversary of its founding, while Osaka University of Foreign Studies celebrates its 100th. 2016 is an important year in the sense that it will build the platform toward the next step into the future. Let's all work towards that future together.

Thank you for listening.