

**New Year's Greeting 2017**  
**A University that Aims for the Creation of Knowledge through Co-Creation**  
**with Society**  
**Challenging a New Stage Based on OU Vision 2021**

**1. Introduction**

I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year. I hope you all have had a refreshing start to 2017 and have begun making your plans for the new year.

In the Chinese Zodiac, this year is the Year of the Rooster. The rooster is a treasured bird that proclaims the coming of a new day. But there are various types of birds that carry a certain significance in Japan, such as the auspicious crane and stork, the hawk of *hatsuyume*, or the first dream of the new year, and the pairing of the Japanese plum and the bush warbler. Also, in the Chinese Zodiac, the character for Rooster (酉) signifies fruits coming to maturity. I would like this year to be just that, a year in which the steps that we've taken come to fruition and fortune smiles on us as the university continues to develop. So I hope that this year becomes one in which all of you, as well as Osaka University, take flight and soar.

In recent years, the landscape surrounding national universities has been rapidly changing. Each national university must respond to these changes, which requires various reforms. Since its opening, Osaka University, has always taken the initiative to carve out new academic fields and produce advanced educational and research organizations. In keeping with such tradition of self-innovation, the university has made efforts in reorganization and reform.

At Osaka University, which has valued dialogue at all times, faculty, staff, and students have strived to solve problems that face the university both from and beyond their viewpoints through sincere mutual dialogue.

This year's great goal for Osaka University, with such a brilliant tradition, is to "strive to become a designated national university."

**2. Striving to Become a Designated National University**

2017 will see a large change in the national university corporation system. Last year, the National University Corporation Act was revised and the Designated National University System was established. This system was established in order to further improve levels of education and research and create innovation at Japanese universities. In this system, the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) will designate a small number of outstanding national universities

that rank among the world's best in a competitive international environment. These designated universities will be required to face the world's challenges head on, propose new social and economic systems, create new worth through the integration of existing fields and the exploration of new fields, and develop human resources. In addition, it is expected that these universities serve as leaders to drive reform in national university corporations.

I had thought for quite a while that the creation of this designated national university system would become the largest change to national universities since the change of legal status to the national university corporation in 2004. Osaka University has been a leader in university reform in Japan, and based on this, I want to take on this new challenge of being a designated national university with pride and conviction. I spoke about this resolve at the Council of Deans and Directors last year, and we carefully held a number of discussions on the topic. This year, we will finally submit the application. By the end of March of this year, national universities will each submit a statement describing how the university is eligible for being selected as a designated national university, and after a document examination, hearing, and on-site survey, the designated universities will be chosen this summer.

I'd like to use this opportunity to share with you all the reasons why Osaka University will attempt to be chosen as a designated national university. If we take another look at the history of Osaka University, we'll see that the university was created from the demands of regional society and developed by the hand of the people. Osaka University's spiritual roots can be found in Kaitokudo, a place of learning established by the civic society of Osaka in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and Tekijuku, where young people gathered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century seeking western knowledge. The Osaka University that we know today was established in 1931 through the strong demand of the government and economy of Kansai as an "Imperial University led by the people" tied together with civic society. Though the university was established by the government, it was the power of the people that developed the university for the purposes of education and human resource cultivation, making Osaka a remarkable city in the nation of Japan.

Since its founding, Osaka University has pursued universal truths and performed world leading education and research, while producing outstanding human resources that will support the next generation. The purpose of the establishment of the Designated National University Corporation System lies in presenting collaboration between university and society and enabling universities to develop education and research activity at the world's highest level. This fits with the Osaka University

Charter, enacted in 2003, that is based on the distinctive features and traditions of the university, whose development has been closely tied to society since its establishment. While keeping in the tradition of self-innovation and holding strong to “autonomy” to solve issues through collaboration among OU community members, when thinking about how Osaka University should be in the future from our own position, I came to realize that becoming a designated national university is both exceedingly natural and necessary for the university.

Last year, I announced “OU (Osaka University) Vision 2021,” which takes “open” as a keyword to stand against inward policies, or “closed” policies, that are advancing in the world. I asserted the promotion of the 5 pillars of OU Vision 2021: education, research, innovation, community, and governance in an approach that is open, not closed, to society. As is clear from the problems that universities around the world face, as well as the change in research modes, universities are expected to create knowledge through co-creation with society.

I’d like to talk about the endeavors for the new year in each of the 5 pillars of OU Vision 2021 based on accomplishments thus far.

### **3. Open Education – The First Year of Education Reform**

This year, we’ll carry out the various education reforms that were expressed in OU Vision 2021 on a full scale.

First, we’ll tackle a pending issue that I’ve had since taking this position as president of the university: creating a new academic calendar. As you may already know, after a year of talks, university-wide approval has been obtained for a new academic calendar which divides the academic year into 4 terms. After spending a great deal of time exchanging opinions with the departments in charge of education and its administration, we will finally introduce this academic calendar, which is both possible and allows for new, more flexible education methods, from April of this year. In connection with this, we will also start work on a full-scale reevaluation of the curriculum at the university, which will be introduced university-wide from the academic year of 2019-2020.

Osaka University was formerly well-known as being an “educational university.” However, in recent years, other universities have also made efforts in educational reform, particularly those in general education, as if to get ahead of the pack. In my New Year’s Greeting last January, I announced that we would begin working on educational reform in order to take back our reputation as being a university that is focused on education. To start, we have been steadily conducting an overall review of

general education from the perspectives of both organization and content. For the organization, we will establish a system to implement planning and management of liberal arts education (which is conducted university-wide as general education), basic specialized professional education, and education to cultivate internationality including language education, respectively. The fundamental policy of this system is the introduction of supervisory division, which takes responsibility for educational content and planning, and (the introduction of) the fundamental principle that all faculty members participate in general education. Based on this policy, we will reexamine the current system of faculty assignment that has been implemented in order to strengthen general education. So I would like to share with you once again the basic concept in which every faculty member participates in general education in some form or another.

As for the content of the education reform, we will improve basic seminars and first-year education as well as strengthen active learning, which will become particularly important in the future. In addition, to strengthen liberal arts education, we will establish a new liberal arts education curriculum that will continue all the way through graduate school, integrated with the high level education that Osaka University has pioneered. We will also establish the “Center for Multilingual Education (tentative name),” in order to reform English education to better utilize the unique characteristics of Osaka University and enhance multilingual education at the university.

During last year’s New Year’s Greeting, I expressed the idea that post-graduate education is the way to answer societal demands as a comprehensive research university, and I also mentioned that I would work on reexamining post-graduate education at Osaka University. At Osaka University, there are already 5 leading graduate programs that are highly praised for their efforts in reforming post-graduate education. Under the Framework for Prominent Graduate Schools that will begin from the 2018-2019 academic year, we will make proposals for proactive approaches to solve the challenges facing university graduate schools with consideration of the results of the leading graduate school programs. The creation of graduate school education programs that are sought by society is an effective way to attract outstanding students. Listening carefully to the demands of society without ignoring academic theory is the way of thinking I have given to “Open Education.”

#### **4. Open Research – 4 New Organizations that will Create a Positive Environment**

Based on the idea of “Open Research,” Osaka University is pushing once again this

year towards the creation and deepening of various knowledge born from world-class foundational and fundamental research, as well as interdisciplinary research. Through such activity, Osaka University aims to be a world-leading comprehensive research university that can contribute to the spiritually rich development of human society as well as the resolution of global issues. To realize this, I will strengthen four organizations, including one established after I took the position of president at the university as well as those organizations to be established this year, and create a virtuous cycle between these organizations.

The first of these four organizations is the Institute for Datability Science established in April 2016. I spoke about the concept of this institute in my New Year's Greeting last year. It is said that the keys to realizing a "Supersmart Society," mentioned in the Science and Technology Basic Plans for the Fifth Term, are IoT (Internet of Things), Big Data Analysis, and the use of artificial intelligence technology. In both the industrial and academic realms, big data analysis and artificial intelligence technology are key technologies that will greatly change research styles and bring about an evolution in research. The Institute for Datability Science aims to promote data-driven research involving all academic fields at the university to match researchers from key technological fields with researchers in all academic fields. In just 8 months after the establishment of the institute, more than 20 research projects have been started.

The second organization, the Open and Transdisciplinary Research Initiative, was established on January 1 of this year. Just as the name implies, this pioneering initiative will cross over organization, societal, and national boundaries to create brand new fields of academia through cooperation and co-creation with society.

The third of these organizations is the "World-Class Research Institute (tentative name)." The Immunology Frontier Research Center (IFReC) in the World Premier International Research Center Program, a program promoted by MEXT, is located at Osaka University. Subsidization of the world-renowned IFReC in the WPI project will cease as of the end of the 2016-2017 academic year. However, we at the university feel that it is important to both continue the operation of this world-leading research hubs, as well as form new research hubs at the world's highest level. Thus, we will establish the World-Class Research Institute in April of 2017, with IFReC as the first center in the institute.

The three organizations above, the Institute for Datability Science, the Open and Transdisciplinary Research Initiative, and the World-Class Research Institute, will closely coordinate with each other moving forward. In each division of the Open and

Transdisciplinary Research Initiative, using academic research from the passion and free thinking of researchers as the cornerstone, we will promote open and transdisciplinary research through the intersection of various academic fields in order to answer societal issues. Through these activities, each division will develop new academic fields, upgrade itself to a world-leading research hub, and eventually, become a part of the World-Class Research Initiative. The Institute for Dataability Science fills the role of accelerating the series of processes that develop the Open and Transdisciplinary Research Initiative into a world-class research hub.

The fourth of these organizations is the Institute for Advanced Co-Creation Studies, established in December of 2016. One of the most important missions of a comprehensive research university is the development of young researchers that will be responsible for the future. However, due to financial difficulties taking a toll on national universities in recent years, we have found ourselves in a serious situation in which this important mission is not sufficiently fulfilled. At the Institute for Advanced Co-Creation Studies, under financial support from outside of the university, we will employ outstanding young researchers for a period of 10 years as special mission faculty members with the aim of improving this set of difficult circumstances.

Through contributions from the Research Foundation for Microbial Diseases of Osaka University (BIKEN), which supports this concept, we are able to employ young bioscience researchers from April of this year. In the future, through additional support from a large number of other corporations and foundations, we would like to develop young researchers from fields outside of bioscience while expanding our budget. In the future, through additional support from a large number of other corporations and foundations, we would like to develop young researchers from fields outside of bioscience and expanding our budget. It is hoped that the special mission faculty members in the Institute for Advanced Co-Creation Studies will develop outstanding, world-class research at Osaka University in cooperation with the 3 organizations I mentioned earlier.

## **5. Open Innovation – From “Industry-University Collaboration” to “Industry-University Co-Creation”**

In order to accelerate open innovation this year, Osaka University, as a world-class innovative university, will engage in advanced industry-university collaboration and promote Osaka University-style comprehensive industry-university co-creation, striving to form a hub for cultivating human resources through industry-university co-creation.

For the purpose of further strengthening industry-university collaboration at Osaka University, we will reorganize the Office for University-Industry Collaboration and change its name to the Office for University-Industry Co-Creation in April. This office will drastically change the system of industry-university collaboration and establish the Innovation Co-creation Division (temporary name) in it to accelerate industry-university co-creation between organizations.

Also, we will establish a practical educational system based on industry-university co-creation in order to perform practical human resource development in cutting-edge fields of research and education where the university and industry co-create, as well as strengthen strategic intellectual property management. In addition, we will improve and reinforce the system to work with projects that we sponsor. We will place the division for promoting university-funded projects in the Office for University-Industry Co-creation so that we can cultivate individuals who develop pre-incubation and innovation and establish eco-friendly systems by using reserve for specific purposes (special management expenses grants) as a source of funding.

Industry-university collaboration at Osaka University, which started with technical support and individual joint research projects as its first stage, developed into its second stage, establishing the Joint Research Course & Collaborative Research Center, a Japan first. The number of courses in this Center is approaching 50. Now, industry-university collaboration is in its third stage, leading industry-university co-creation.

Last May, we reached an agreement of large-scale industry-university collaboration with Chugai Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. Chugai will, according to the agreement, provide one billion yen per year for a period of 10 years, allowing IFRc to maintain its continuous operation. This is not just industry-university collaboration. In hopes that this will enlighten abilities, ideas, and sensitivity of individuals who participate in the collaboration, we call it “leading industry-university co-creation.”

In “leading industry-university co-creation,” a system will be created to allow us to be involved in long-term collaboration with companies in basic research and receive continuous and large-scale funding for research from companies, thereby realizing comprehensive industry-university collaboration from the stage of basic research.

Let me tell you some good news that I received at the end of last year. Osaka University was selected for the MEXT Creation of Centers for Science and Technology Verification Program. This program aims to help the local community, companies, universities and municipal governments to come together to promote commercialization of projects through their joint research and development in a strengthened industry-university-government collaboration system. This is

implemented for the purpose of developing local communities and MEXT supports the upgrading of institutes and facilities that will join the program. With grants from MEXT for this program, Osaka University will build a new research facility next to the Techno-Alliance Building on the Suita Campus as a hub for open innovation through industry-university-government collaboration.

## **6. Open Community – A Variety of Plans Toward Its Realization**

This year, Osaka University will officially undertake the improvement of systems and a safe environment where international students with various backgrounds can lead their student lives in peace, engage in high-quality research and education, and receive a variety of support. We plan to increase the number of international students to 15 percent of all students and that of Japanese students who study abroad to 8 percent by 2021, and we, as a hub for international education and research, will nurture diverse human resources who can be active on a global scale.

For collaboration with overseas universities, bearing in mind that university globalization will further accelerate, we will establish a close relationship with some 20 prestigious overseas universities as global partners from 2017. With these partners, we will establish programs such as a double degree program and a joint degree program. Furthermore, we will actively have joint research projects and seminars so that research results can be shared among partners.

In 2018 or later, we will expand our research and education systems abroad and establish overseas campuses in ASEAN countries so that students abroad can be involved in research and education at Osaka University while they are in their own country. There, courses related to the resolution of global scale issues will be opened to nurture individuals who can contribute to the development of local industries.

For university-community collaboration, we will integrate and restructure 4 related institutes including The Museum of Osaka University, Kaitokudo for the 21st Century, Tekijuku Commemoration Center, and Osaka University Archives to establish the Institute for University-Community Co-Creation (tentative name.) Under its initiative, we will promote outreach activities in research and education and, at the same time, aim to realize the next step of social contribution, “University-Community Co-Creation.” We will organize a joint committee with citizens, local communities, and municipal governments to share challenges to be tackled, and seek measures for solving them by using wisdom co-creation obtained through conversations. Indeed, our aim is for the creation of wisdom through co-creation with community.

This year, discussions about the redevelopment of the Nakanoshima 4-chome area, at



the center of which the Osaka University Nakanoshima Center is located, will come to a point. In cooperation with municipal governments led by Osaka City and Osaka Prefecture, as well as companies in that area, Osaka University will put University-Community Co-Creation into practice with the Osaka University “Nakanoshima Agora concept” at the core. While preparation for construction of Osaka New Arts Museum (temporary title) is under way, we will discuss how to proceed with research and education related to us.

In order to improve facilities which influence environmental amenities of open community, concrete design work of the Minoh Campus will begin this year. On April 12, 2016, we concluded an official agreement with Minoh city on the moving of the Minoh Campus. Full-fledged preparation for the move is being carried out in anticipation of the opening of the new campus in 2021.

The new Minoh Campus will be located in the front of a new station on the Kita-Osaka Kyuko Line (tentatively named Minoh-Semba station) in the Semba-higashi area of Minoh city. While Osaka University will make new education and research buildings and student dormitories, Minoh city will build a city-run cultural exchange facility and library. Osaka University will manage all of these buildings as a whole. This is an epoch-making trial in which national university corporation and municipal government work together to create the campus and urban space.

In addition, university facilities will be constructed in a way that university facilities will fit in the city and collaboration with citizens will develop on a daily basis -- the urban campus as a co-creation space is just about to be born. On the new campus, centered around the School of Foreign Studies, language-related research and education institutes will be active. We aim to develop new co-creation activity of industry-university and community-university by taking advantage of the location of the new campus.

Also, this year, the “Global Village” Facilities Improvement Project, a project for improving student dormitories for international students and Japanese students as well as housing for faculty and staff as a “global village,” will take shape toward the opening of the village in 2020. 2,600 units will be provided as a hub for nurturing individuals who can thrive on the world stage.

Furthermore, on the west side of the Administrative Bureau on the Suita Campus, construction of the Comprehensive Research Building (Interdisciplinary Research Type) was started last year. It will be completed around autumn of this year. Functions of promoting innovation at Osaka University will be integrated in this building. This Comprehensive Research Building adjacent to IC Hall is planned to connect with the

Administration Bureau via sky walkway. An integrated space connecting these three buildings will contribute to the reinforcement of the university's organization.

## **7. Open Governance — To be Achieved with Members of the OU Community**

The management expenses grants, government grants to national university corporations, have been drastically reduced since the change of legal status to the national university corporation in 2004. The reduced amount of grants to Osaka University reached about 11.7 billion yen in the last 12 years, which is about 27 percent of the management expenses grants for 2016.

In addition, it has been decided that grants for the third mid-term goal period will be reduced by 1.6 percent every year. If this policy continues for the 4th period and beyond, the management expenses grants for 2031, the 100th anniversary of the foundation of Osaka University, will be reduced by more than 7 billion yen compared to those of this academic year.

Under such difficult financial circumstances, in order to pursue high-level education and research for getting at the truth of scholarship and become one of the world's top research universities, we need to steadily implement various projects including measures listed in the "OU Vision 2021." To this end, keeping in mind the Specified National University Corporation System, from a mid- and long- term perspective, this year, we will carry out a full-scale financial structure reform in order to secure stable financial management and lay a strong financial foundation.

More specifically, first, we will review a conventional way of budget allocation that makes across-the-board cuts in spending and establish a way of allocating budgets to strengthen the university's function so that we can develop the strengths and characteristics of Osaka University by selecting and focusing items and, at the same time, we will secure financial sources for reliably implementing important measures.

Second, we will launch discussions about budget allocation tailored to future organization improvement including restructuring.

Third, in consideration of a possible severe financial situation in the future, regarding the entire budget of the university including budgets for labor costs, budgets that can be used at the discretion of the president, and external funding, we will launch full reform of allocation of budgets for labor and other direct costs. Although difficult financial circumstances are expected this year, too, we will work together to do all kinds of things to develop Osaka University while making use of limited budgets and further revitalizing education, research, and society-industry co-creation.

Regarding gender equality-related activities, last year, Osaka University was

selected for the "Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment (Collaboration Type)" sponsored by MEXT. Under this project, as a cycle-oriented system for nurturing female researchers based on industry-university-government collaboration, we will cultivate female researchers, and create and develop environments for them to succeed in a sustainable way. Moving forward, we will increase the number of organizations with which we will work together on this program and develop this program in order to create clusters for cycle-oriented nurturing of female researchers. Through this approach, we will establish a network for offering role models for the next generation and further develop it.

## **8. Compliance – Rooting Out Misconduct**

In closing, I'd like to take this opportunity to mention something in particular. Unfortunately, once again last year again, we had misconducts such as inappropriate accounting, information leakage, and a faculty member who was indicted for accepting a bribe.

It is very deplorable to have to say that there is still have such misconduct despite our efforts to root out misuse of public research funds that was discovered two years ago. As president, I deeply regret this situation. This misconduct significantly diminishes our university's standing and people's trust in the university, which also treads on your serious daily efforts.

To prevent this misconduct from happening again, OU members are making efforts individually, such as reinforcing the oversight, but the point is that each member of the OU community should have a sense of ethics and be aware of the importance of legal compliance. We're going to hold compliance workshops for all full-time faculty members next month. I strongly encourage you to attend the workshop and push forward with education and research with a high sense of ethics and unwavering resolve not to undergo misconduct again, so we can walk the path of recovering the public's trust.

Now Osaka University is entering a new stage. With the fast-approaching 90th anniversary of Osaka University and 100th anniversary of Osaka University of Foreign Studies in 2021, Osaka University is entering a new stage. In order to continue to perform education and research 50 and even 100 years from now, I want to steadily continue endeavors at the university. At the same time, to carry over such efforts into the future, I'd like to work hard in creating a sense of values in anticipation of this next step while harnessing all of your individual talents.

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