

■ Feature

Okayama University establishes the SDGs Promotion Headquarters

In 2017 Okayama University held the world's first international conference on the attainment of SDGs in Okayama City in cooperation with other organizations. Notably, Okayama University was the only national university to be a recipient of the first Japan SDGs Awards organized by the Japanese Government.

This year Okayama University continues to undertake more wide ranging activities to lead the world. First, Vice Executive Director and Senior University Global Administrator (UGA) Atsufumi Yokoi gave a speech at the Global Festival of Action for Sustainable Development, held in Bonn, Federal Republic of Germany from March 21 to 23, 2018. This festival is an international conference held annually by the United Nations SDG Action Campaign to introduce the efforts of organizations that have received SDGs-related awards.



Vice Executive Director and UGA Yokoi giving a speech

He introduced the University's efforts to promote the SDGs and delivered a message stating that the University will take a strong lead from the Okayama area, encouraging people throughout the world to implement the SDGs. After his speech at the conference, he said, "The formulation of the SDGs made us realize that the efforts towards sustainable development that the Okayama area and Okayama University had facilitated over a long period of time were worthy of attracting worldwide attention. It is important for us to deliver a strong message to the world from Okayama and Japan in the future."

In March 2018, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Convention on Biological Diversity and share efforts at all levels from local to global to help conserve biodiversity and achieve the SDGs, the International Day for Biological Diversity Symposium "Biodiversity and SDGs" was hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Okayama University, United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS), Global Environment Outreach Centre (GEOC), and Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Japan at the Elizabeth Rose Conference Hall in the United Nations University (Shibuya City, Tokyo).



President Makino introduced an effort for the SDGs

President Hirofumi Makino delivered a lecture titled “Partnerships Resonating with Each Other—Okayama University’s Initiatives for Contributing to the SDGs.” Citing specific cases, President Makino introduced Okayama University’s own process of making STI (Science, Technology and Innovation) for the SDGs a reality to solve social challenges, a role that should be played by universities, while strengthening partnerships with other organizations in other regions and countries.

In the latter half of the symposium, a panel discussion was held with the theme of Biodiversity and SDGs with Dr. Chigusa Hanaoka, Senior Research Administrator at Okayama University acting as the facilitator. Panelists representing business, academic and governmental organizations shared their specific actions at Okayama Prefecture to conserve biodiversity and help achieve the SDGs. They highlighted the fact that such actions at the local level help make local communities more attractive and that these actions need to be replicated throughout Japan and the rest of the world. They also discussed the role of academic institutions in human resource development and technical support. Then Dr. Hanaoka concluded the panel discussion by summarizing the initiatives of business, academic and government circles to continue and develop biodiversity conservation activities while pursuing the SDGs. At the end of the symposium, Mr. Naohisa Okuda, director of the Biodiversity Policy Division, Nature Conservation Bureau, Ministry of the Environment delivered the closing address.

In addition, Okayama University is also putting efforts into activities rooted in local Okayama. The University hosted the Health Festa in Okayama for the first time with the Sanyo Shimbun Co., Ltd. and some other organizations at Okayama Convention Center on May 3 and 4.

This year’s festa, which was held as a project commemorating the 150th anniversary of Okayama University’s Medical School and as a project that can help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), was designed to encourage all people of all ages to live a healthy life, thereby contributing to their welfare.

The event featured two special lectures and 18 open lectures offered by faculty members from Okayama University and other academic institutions as well as exhibition and hands-on-learning booths for health and medical information. During the two days, a total of about 4,000 visitors deepened their knowledge about health.

In the open lectures, speakers explained how to treat and prevent familiar disorders such as locomotive syndrome, lifestyle diseases and dementia. The audience listened intently, taking pictures and notes.

Exhibition and hands-on learning booths included the SDGs Promotion Booth, which informed visitors about the University’s efforts to help achieve SDGs, the Okayama University Hospital Division of Nursing’s Booth, and corporate sponsors’ booths.

From now on, the University will promote efforts to achieve SDGs. In cooperation with the world, we will continue our strong and steady unique activities that can only be done in Okayama based on the “fruitful academic capital” of Makino Vision.

Further information

About SDGs (the United Nations)
<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>



About an approach to SDGs of Okayama University (Japanese page)
<http://www.okayama-u.ac.jp/tp/profile/okayama-sdgs.html>



Okayama University (English page)
http://www.okayama-u.ac.jp/eng/news/index_id7501.html
http://www.okayama-u.ac.jp/eng/news/index_id7638.html



Okayama University (Japanese page)
http://www.okayama-u.ac.jp/tp/news/news_id7420.html
http://www.okayama-u.ac.jp/tp/news/news_id7578.html
http://www.okayama-u.ac.jp/tp/news/news_id7526.html



Reference (Okayama University e-Bulletin)

e-Bulletin vol.21 : Okayama University Hosts World’s First International Conference on Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
http://www.okayama-u.ac.jp/user/kouhou/ebulletin/feature/vol21/feature_001.html



■ News

The Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering in Health Systems was established in April 2018

The Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering in Health Systems was established in April 2018 as the eighth graduate school of Okayama University.

Under the theme of “health systems,” which deal with challenges in real-life healthcare situations, the Graduate School focuses on developing students’ problem-solving skills—they learn to use a cycle of identifying problems and their backgrounds, analyzing the problems, developing solutions, and then implementing the solutions to improve real-life situations in a scientific way. The Graduate School is the first in 13 years established by Okayama University.

Its signboard unveiling ceremony was held on April 5. The ceremony was attended by President Hirofumi Makino, Executive Director and Executive Vice President for Planning, Evaluation and General Affairs Dr. Kayo Takahashi, about 50 faculty and staff members, including Dean of the Graduate School Dr. Masaharu Seno, and about 80 master’s and doctoral course students (the very first students of the graduate school). At the ceremony, President Makino said, “It’s important for the University to establish graduate schools that can meet the demands of the times to promote necessary research.” Dr. Seno said, “Individual efforts and cooperation by all faculty and staff members and students are essential in making this graduate school perfectly unique and meaningful.”



President Hirofumi Makino, Dr. Kayo Takahashi, and Dr. Masaharu Seno unveiled the signboard

On June 23, Okayama University held an event to celebrate the establishment of the Graduate School. The celebration event was attended by many people including local public officials and corporate representatives. Congratulatory speeches were made by Mr. Yutaka Takimoto, Deputy Director-General for Coordination between Upper Secondary Schools and Universities and Higher Education Bureau, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; Dr. Stephen Lanier, Vice President for Research and Dr. Ahmad Ezzeddine, Associate Vice President for Educational Outreach and International Programs, both from Wayne State University in the U.S.; and



Mr. Yutaka Takimoto delivered a congratulatory address