

S&T Articles from East Asia and Pacific

April 2008

National Science Foundation Tokyo Regional Office

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JAPAN

1. [Up to \$90K Scholarship for Foreign Students] Beginning with JFY2008 (April 2008-March 2009), Keio University has launched a new scholarship program that provides up to Yen 9 million (~\$90K) for two years to outstanding foreign students enrolled in the university's Masters degree programs. This is one of the means that Keio University tries to increase its visibility world-wide. Keio will publicize the scholarship on homepages of 219 universities in 43 countries/economies and select about five students per year solely based on their academic achievement and personal characters, regardless of their financial status. The selection will be made about the same time as prominent U.S. universities select foreign students for scholarship. The scholarship includes a tuition

waiver and a stipend of about Yen 200K (~\$2K) per month. [From Tokyo Office: The University has selected the 2008 recipients among already enrolled foreign students. Details for 2009 cycle are not yet posted on their homepage.] (Summary translation of an article in Asahi Newspaper – 4/22/08)

2. [Exchange with Middle East Countries] Middle East countries are strengthening exchange of university students with Japan. Egypt has a plan to establish a Japan-Egypt Science and Technology University and is asking Japanese government and universities to support the research facilities and faculty in addition to providing financial aid. They are trying to cooperate with Waseda and Kyushu Universities. Saudi Arabia plans to send 50-100 students to Japan in science and engineering fields through their scholarship program. Teikyo University and Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University are eager to receive them. Iraq has a plan to increase the number of their exchange students from the present 10 to 100 in a few years. (Summary of an article in Nihon Keizai Newspaper – 4/4/08)

3. [Stock Option Available at National Universities] To enable national universities to choose stock options the Japanese Government's IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) Headquarters (chaired by the Prime Minister Fukuda) has drafted a bill that will relax the relevant regulations. The bill will be submitted to the Diet session this fall and is expected to be enacted in spring 2009. Under the present law, universities are required to receive licensing fees in cash from companies when the companies use intellectual properties owned by the universities. If the regulation is relaxed, national universities can choose stock options instead of cash as payment, and can sell the stocks when the stock values increase. This will ultimately accelerate industry-university cooperation. (Summary translation of an article in Nihon Keizai Newspaper – 4/24/08)

4. [Japan Prize Recipients] Three Americans received the Japan Prize-2008. They are: Dr. Vinton G. Cerf (Vice President and Chief Internet Evangelist, Google Inc.) and Dr. Robert E. Kahn, Chairman, CEO, and President of Corporation for National Research Initiatives) in the Information Communication Theory and Technology category, and Dr. Victor A. McKusick (The McKusick-Nathans Institute of Genetic Medicine at the Johns Hopkins University) in the Medical Genomics and Genetics category. Two scientific fields are designated each year for awards, and Yen 50 million (~\$500K) is provided to each field. The award ceremony was held in the presence of the Emperor and Empress, the Prime Minister, the chairs of both Houses, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, ambassadors, researchers, and journalists. The first prize was awarded in 1985 and it was its 24th this year. The U.S. Ambassador Schieffer later held a reception for the prize recipients at his official residence. (Japan Prize Homepage at <http://www.japanprize.jp/English.htm>)

5. **[Water Research]** The University of Tokyo and Suntory Company jointly launched a large-scale project on “water.” Suntory has donated Yen 400 million (~\$4 million) to establish a new program at the university, which is the biggest amount of its kind in the University’s history. The University already had an informal “Water Forum,” and Suntory whose company motto is “to live with water” decided to contribute to it. About ten researchers will participate full-time in the program, with varying research focus from water utilization and water processing technologies to weather. (Summary translation of an article in Asahi Newspaper – 4/8/08)

6. **[New Icebreaker]** A launching ceremony took place for “Shirase”, Japan’s newest icebreaker for Antarctic expeditions. Taking the name of its predecessor, “Shirase” is Japan’s fourth icebreaker and is scheduled to go on its first voyage in November 2009 after interior work on it is completed next May. The new Shirase that is a 12,500-ton ship with 138 meters long and 28 meters wide, was built at a cost of Yen 37.6 billion (~\$376 million). It is slightly larger than its predecessor and has top-level ice-breaking capabilities. It can move at 3 knots, breaking up ice of 1.5 meters thick. It uses seawater to clear the snow on the ice, allowing it to move smoothly for better fuel-efficiency, and has a double-walled fuel tank to prevent leaks. (Summary of an article in Japan Times – 4/17/08)

7. **[Astronauts to be Recruited]** JAXA (Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency) has begun recruiting astronauts for the first time in a decade in the wake of the successful mission to carry its maiden space laboratory to the International Space Station. JAXA will pick three candidates and announce them next February. The selected candidates will take various training programs at NASA for two years before certified as astronauts. (Summary of an article in Japan Times – 4/3/08)

8. **[JSPS Fellowship to Include Taiwan and Palestine]** JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) has decided to make Taiwan and Palestine eligible countries to apply to JSPS’ fellowship programs for foreign scientists and foreign postdocs beginning in JFY 2009 (starting from April 2009) for the first time. (JSPS Homepage)

9. **[Saruhashi Award]** The winner of the Saruhashi Award for 2008 was announced and the recipient is Dr. Kyoko Higashizaki, the Department of Organometallic Chemistry, University of Tokyo. The Saruhashi Award was established in 1981 and was named after Dr. Katsuko Saruhashi, an earth scientist and the founder of the “Society for Bright Future for Women Scientists.” The Society provides an annual award of Yen 300,000 (~\$3K) to a prominent woman scientist under 50 in natural science fields (Summary of an article in Asahi Newspaper – 4/24/08)

10. **[Cherry Tree Seeds to Space Lab]** JAXA (Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency) has

approved a project to send the seeds of cherry trees to Japan's Kibo laboratory at the International Space Station. Japan Manned Space Systems Corp., a Tokyo-based private-sector consortium of 55 companies, organized the seeds' six-month stay in space in part to see whether or how microgravity will affect them. The space project will send lily and violet seeds along with the seeds from 10 cherry trees. (Summary of an article in Japan Times – 4/24/08)

11. [Opportunities at RIKEN] RIKEN is recruiting Research Unit Leaders in Bioinformatics, Theoretical Biology, and Computational Biology (<http://www.riken.jp/engn/r-world/info/recruit/080616/index.html>). RIKEN has also announced that it is seeking about 20 Foreign Postdoctoral Researchers in physics, chemistry, biology, medicine, engineering and any other fields related to research now going on at RIKEN (<http://www.riken.jp/engn/r-world/info/recruit/080727/index.html>). [Source: RIKEN's WEB sites]

12. [New Funding Opportunities and New Awards from MEXT (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology)]

- **Math and Science Students Support Program:** MEXT selected Kagoshima University, Ehime University, Tohoku University, Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, Hokkaido University as awardees for this program. Each of them will receive up to Yen 16 million (~\$16K) per year for four years.

- **Research on Possible Tokai-East Nankai-Nankai Earthquakes:** MEXT selected JAMSTEC (Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology) and University of Tokyo's Earthquake Research Institute as awardees to conduct research on the predicted Tokai-Higashi Nankai-Nankai Earthquakes. The former will receive Yen 450 million (~\$4.5 million) per year for five years to study the link between the three sites, and the latter will receive Yen 40 million (~\$400K) on R&D for potential changes in sea-bottom and earthquake/tsunami/crust.

- **Acceleration of Internationalization:** MEXT announced a new program for accelerating internationalization at Japanese universities. An awardee will receive up to Yen 15 million (~\$150K) per year for up to three years. The program will support activities such as establishment of double-degree programs or overseas offices and assignment of coordinators for promoting internationalization.

- **Photon and Quantum Science Research Centers:** MEXT announced a new program that establishes networked research centers for advanced photon and quantum beam R&D. A project team that conducts next generation beam R&D will receive Yen 300-500 million (~\$3-5 million) per year for five years and two project teams that conduct advanced beam R&D will receive Yen 100 million (~\$1 million) each per year for five years.

- **Element Strategy Project:** This new program announced by MEXT tries to find alternative

materials for rare metals. An awardee will receive 20-40 million (~\$200-400K) in JFY2008. The details after JFY2009 are not yet decided.

(Summary translation of a MEXT Homepage)

Korea

13. [S&T Information at a Glance] MOST (Ministry of Science and Technology) made available NTIS (National Technology Information System) for public use on March 31. NTIS is a comprehensive collection of information on R&D project, human resources, R&D equipment, facility, and performance gathered from the 18 R&D-related ministries. By registering an ID and password at www.ntis.go.kr, users can search the following: National R&D project and analysis, human resources in national R&D, equipment and facility, thesis, patent, and national R&D index and other S&T indicators. (Summary translation of an article in JST's Watcher- 3/31/08)

14. [U.S.-Korea Nano Forum] MOST (Ministry of Science and Technology) held the 5th U.S.-Korea Forum on Nanotechnology on April 17-18 in Korea, focusing on Nano-Biotechnology. Dr. Mike Roco, NSF/ENG, gave a keynote speech on the 18th on "The Changing Face of Nanotechnology." The organizers were Dr. Myung S. Jhon of Carnegie Mellon University in the U.S. and Dr. Jo-Won Lee of the National Program for Tera-level Nanodevices in Korea.

(source: http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/org/nanotechnology-forum/Forum_5/Invitation.htm)

Singapore

15. [Dr. Davor Solter] Dr. Davor Solter, a pioneer in stem-cell science, joins A*STAR's (Agency for Science, Technology and Research) IMB (Institute of Medical Biotechnology) to nurture next generation of researchers and clinical scientists, applying his experience from 40 years of research career at Max Planck Institute. (Summary translation of an article in JST's Watcher- 3/20/08)

16. [5th Anniversary of IBN] The IBN (Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology) celebrated its 5th anniversary. During the five years the institute produced 418 journal articles, made 479 patent applications, received 19 domestic and international awards, carried 82 cooperative programs with industries and academia, and gave 251 invited talks at international conferences. (Summary translation of an article in JST's Watcher – 3/25)

Malaysia

17. [Tsunami Warning System] MOSTI (Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation) announced that they newly added to their present 24-hour tsunami warning system, 15 devices that detect the change in sea water levels, 14 cameras in coastal zones, and 10 sirens for warning.

(Summary translation of an article in JST's Watcher – 4/9/08)