

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Promoting a Gender-Equal Research Environment

THE NUMBER and ratio of female scholars engaged in research at universities in Japan still remains remarkably low compared to many other countries. This highlights an area of Japan's academic environment and system in which there is still plenty of room for improvement. Despite this, however, it is also true that there are many female Japanese scientists who are internationally recognized as outstanding in their fields. It is all the more vital, therefore, to create an environment in which they can fully exercise their capabilities and flourish.

To this end, Kyoto University is focusing its efforts on developing a research environment in which all scholars can fully and freely pursue their research regardless of gender. As part of those efforts, we established our Center for Women Researchers (featured in this issue) and the Tachibana Award, an award acknowledging the achievements of outstanding female researchers at Kyoto University.

This year, in order to further enhance our efforts, Kyoto University has merged with the Center for Women Researchers and Gender Equality Promotion Office to form Office for the Promotion of Gender Equality (Gender Equality Promotion Center). To commemorate the establishment of this new organization, this special issue of Research Activities introduces several of the university's outstanding female researchers and their activities and achievements. It also highlights some of the university's initiatives to support female researchers. The scholars selected to appear in this brochure represent only a very small sampling our talented female research population, and we will continue to introduce yet further accomplishments by female researchers in subsequent issues.

In closing, I would like to express my sincere congratulations to the editor of this special issue, Prof. Kayo Inaba of our Graduate School of Biostudies, on her receipt of the internationally prestigious L'Oréal-UNESCO Award for Women in Science in recognition of her outstanding contributions to immunology research.

June 2014

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