

# CONNECT

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KYUSHU UNIVERSITY

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Issue 2



# President's Message



**Tatsuro Ishibashi**  
President, Kyushu University

For more than a century since its founding in 1911, Kyushu University has maintained a long history and tradition of education and research as one of Japan’s core comprehensive universities. We are recognized for our extensive contributions to society in fostering professional excellence and producing highly specialized research findings.

This year, we have witnessed significant changes in our lives and enormous damage to society and the economy due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. In these times of drastic social change, humanity must look for ways of living with and beyond COVID-19. And I believe that Kyushu University will play a vital role in bringing together expertise to find answers to the difficult problems we now face and apply them as viable solutions to realize a new, more sustainable society.

Kyushu University celebrates its 110th anniversary next year. Over the next 100 years, it is our mission to pass down the wisdom cultivated by the university’s long history and tradition to the next generation. By continuing autonomous reforms, I am committed to working together with our students, faculty, and staff to fulfill our role as a research and educational hub that drives innovation through knowledge creation.

# Fast Facts

## Ranking

QS World University  
Ranking (WUR) 2021

#124

Engineerring - Mineral & Mining  
(WUR) 2020 by Subject:

#36

Engineering - Chemical, Chemistry,  
Materials Science (WUR) 2020 by Subject:

#51-100

## Inbound



97 countries and regions are represented at Kyushu University!

One out of every eight students is from overseas.

2,328  
18,566  
(total students)

International student ratio

13%

(As of May 1, 2020)



kyushu university fast facts

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## About the cover

The Faculty of Agriculture at Kyushu University is the world's leading research center for silkworm breeding, where research on silkworm breeding has continued for more than 100 years.

## Location

Foreign people also like Fukuoka!

Ranked

1st

for Growth rate of foreign residents

Reference data: Fukuoka Facts

Photographs provided by Fukuoka City





# Leap into the Next

Our move to Ito Campus began in 2005, but our work to create a cutting-edge campus for the 21st century started much earlier. Wanting to build more than just a world-class research and education center, we put great thought into the design in order to create a beautiful, open campus that coexists with the natural environment and preserves much of the original landscape.



Ito campus is divided into three zones: The West, Center, and East Zones. The West Zone is home to the education and research facilities of the Engineering, Mathematics, Sciences, and Agriculture departments. The Center Zone is home to facilities for our KIKAN education program, research, student support, and extracurricular activities. The East Zone is home to the humanities and social sciences as well as Central Library, one of the largest university libraries in Japan.



## Five Campuses, Unlimited Possibilities

### Hospital Campus



Da Vinci surgical system



Home to Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmaceutical Sciences

### Beppu Campus



Home to Internal Medicine, Surgery and Orthopedics

### Chikushi Campus

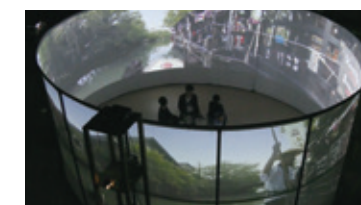


Q-shu University Experiment with Steady-State Spherical Tokamak (QUEST)



Home to Engineering Sciences

### Ohashi Campus



Proposal of new experiential type video contents using full-circumference screen



Home to Art and Design





## Kyushu University's Response to the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread, having a powerful impact on every aspect of social and economic lives. Under these circumstances, Kyushu University has made the health and well-being of its students, faculty, staff, and community members its top priority. In addition, in order to overcome this situation, we are implementing a response based on the "With & Beyond Corona" concept of living with the new coronavirus infection and at the same time overcoming it to create a new situation. For example, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Kyushu University is implementing a wide range of initiatives in several fields, including research, medical care (Kyushu University Hospital), and student support and education (online classes).



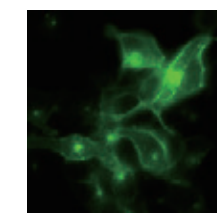
### Faculty of Agriculture Silkworm Research Center Succeeds in Developing Vaccine Candidate Proteins

Among the 450 types of silkworms bred at Kyushu University, Professor Takahiro Kusakabe at the Faculty of Agriculture has found one capable of internally producing large amounts of recombinant proteins that can be used to make vaccines. In 2018, KAICO Ltd. was founded in Fukuoka City as a Kyushu University venture to commercialize technologies developed by the university, such as recombinant protein expression using silkworms. Faced with the COVID-19 pandemic in recent months, we have succeeded in developing a vaccine protein candidate for COVID-19. The spike-like proteins on the surface of SARS-CoV-2 particles are the major surface proteins that the virus uses to bind to receptors, which are other proteins that act as doorways into a human cell. Kyushu University has succeeded in artificially creating a protein with the same structure as this spike protein. The development of a vaccine using silkworms will likely allow for mass production at lower costs and contribute to better treatment in developing countries. Toward the practical use of vaccines, we will push through the research in collaboration with the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

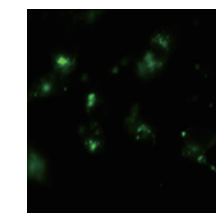


### Greenpharma Research Center for Academic Drug Discovery Narrows Down Three Approved Drugs to Be Repurposed as Potential Treatments for COVID-19

A research team led by Professor Motohiro Nishida of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the Kyushu University Faculty is conducting research that explores therapeutic agents in already approved drugs that could be used to treat COVID-19 and has successfully narrowed down three potential candidates. The Greenpharma Research Center launched in 2015 with the aim of developing innovative drugs that are safe and peaceful for both people and the environment by cooperating cutting-edge techniques of "echo-pharma (or drug repurposing)" and "green chemistry." One of the center's principles is "sustainable pharmacy," which aims to establish an innovative strategy for the treatment of patients suffering from incurable diseases by unraveling a new pharmacological action of already approved drugs. As a result of further research, we have narrowed down the candidate drugs to one and are currently starting to verify the inhibitory activity of this drug against SARS-CoV-2 infection to human cells.



Membrane localization of GFP-fused SARS-CoV-2 receptor (ACE2) in cells (without exposure to Spike protein).



ACE2 internalization by exposure to SARS-CoV-2-derived Spike protein (produced by Prof. Kusakabe's group).

### What Epidemiology Can Tell Us About Saving Lives and the Economy

In a study conducted by Professor Shunsuke Managi, Director of Urban Institute at Kyushu University, the research team calculated the value of life that could be saved by implementing social distancing strategies and found that 4,391 trillion yen, or approximately 47% of the global annual GDP, could be saved. For Japan, the savings would amount to the equivalent of the country's GDP, 536 trillion yen. By concentrating on and implementing social distancing strategies, Japan stands to save more than the value of a year's worth of GDP. Savings lives is acceptable because that human capital will subsequently contribute to the economy in the future.



Value of lives saved through such measures (in trillions of dollars)





## Kyushu University's Measures for Students

Many Kyushu University students have been adversely impacted by the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), including students whose guardians are facing economic hardship and those who have experienced a decrease in income due to having to stay home from part-time work. Most of the classes have moved online, and the entrance ceremony for new students had to be canceled. Much the same as other students around the world, student interaction has been severely limited throughout the pandemic, which has caused duress, confusion, and even mental and physical illnesses for some

students. These are all reasons why Kyushu University immediately launched several initiatives to ensure students feel safe studying here. For example, Kyushu University has established the **Emergency Student Support Fund (University-Sponsored Aid)**, which provides ¥30,000 to students in need of financial assistance upon application to relieve anxiety surrounding their studies. Students who have been adversely impacted by the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) are eligible to apply. We have also set up the **Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Student Relief Fund** to provide further support for students experiencing financial difficulties. This was made possible thanks to the generous assistance offered by the wide range of people, including alumni and individuals on-campus, who all answered the university's call for help. Together with the **Emergency Student Support Fund**, this fund reached many students and helped alleviate their financial stress.

## New Student Welcome Ceremony

The university was finally able to hold an entrance ceremony for new students in September. We wanted new students who hadn't made it to campus to come and meet their friends, so we took careful precautions, dividing the ceremony into two parts via a reservation system, with one-half of new students in attendance at each. About 600 new students attended from each school and enjoyed mingling among new friends.



## Mental Health App Supports University Students

Reducing the mental stress of students has also been an important topic for us. To better support the well-being of our students, researchers at Kyushu University have developed a unique smartphone app called "Mental APP," which combines psychiatry and user-centered design. Through continued development of this app, we hope to expand use at Kyushu University and eventually branch out to other universities.

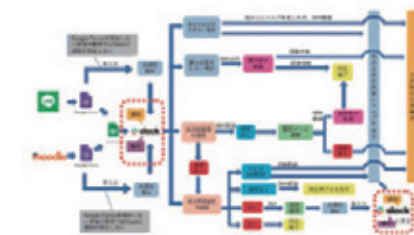


Mental App provides a calendar system for record daily conditions, self-screening functions, and related mental health advice and information.

## The Three Characteristics (Environment, Support, Analysis)

Since 2013, our university has been ahead of other universities in the nation in developing a digital learning environment across the university with the keyword "PC required." Utilizing the M2B (Mitsuba) Learning Support System\*, the basis for this digital learning environment, the university is offering online classes in conjunction with a teleconference system (spring semester: approximately 4,900 courses). In addition, a student-led support organization called "quickQ" was established, and students were involved in the establishment of the system and the design and implementation of the inquiry flow was devised in just 10 days before the service was launched. Since Kyushu University has been accumulating teaching and learning data since 2014, we can compare this year's data with last year's and evaluate the results. We will continue to analyze the data accumulated for the online class evaluation and use it to review student learning and improve teaching materials for teachers.

\* Coined an acronym for three major systems (Moodle, Mahara, BookQ)



## Confronting the COVID Crisis

The two major missions of Kyushu University Hospital are: (1) to engage in COVID-19 treatment in the Fukuoka area and make direct contributions to infection control and (2) to maintain the hospital's functions for advanced medical care outside of COVID-19 treatment and ensuring its role as a "last bastion" for regional medical care. The hospital is playing a central role in controlling infectious diseases through sharing information in real-time with Fukuoka Prefecture, Fukuoka City, and area health centers. All of the hospital staff, including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, medical technical staff, and clerical staff will face medical care challenges without giving in to fear of risk and keep tackling against COVID-19 by converging the collective strengths of Kyushu University such as the scientific power of new therapeutic drugs and vaccine development, creativity, and rich and varied human qualities.



Staff made face masks by hand to distribute to outpatients.

## Fighting COVID-19 in Asia: Teleconference Held Between Kyushu University\* & National Taiwan University

\*Kyushu University Institute for Asian and Oceanian Studies (Medicine and Health Cluster) / Telemedicine Development Center of Asia (TEMDEC)

Because COVID-19 is such a new disease, much is still unknown about its clinical outcomes and treatment, which has made it a serious issue worldwide. With the aim of sharing information on current efforts and treatments in countries around the world, Kyushu University held a teleconference entitled "How to tackle with COVID-19 in Asia," which brought together Kyushu University Hospital and National Taiwan University. The first teleconference was attended by more than 3,800 participants from around the world, including those from medical facilities in the Philippines and Singapore, which have seen a large number of cases. The second conference was attended by participants from 116 locations in more than 14 countries and regions worldwide.





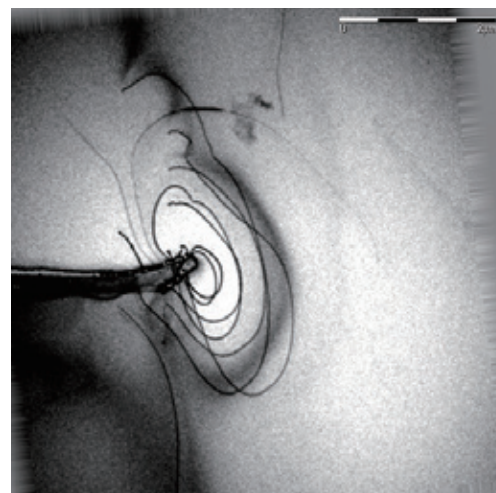


# Experience the Cutting-Edge Firsthand

On-campus experiments and demonstrations of research findings show firsthand the advanced technologies that are shaping our future.

## Exploring the Miniature World in Big Detail

The Ultramicroscopy Research Center houses a sophisticated high-voltage electron microscope equipped with an in-column, omega-type energy filter and an SDD-type x-ray detector. It provides three-dimensional structural analysis of specimens thicker than 1  $\mu\text{m}$  in both materials and biological sciences using electron tomography. The electron microscope has been used for sample analysis brought back by an asteroid explorer “Hayabusa,” it holds the same level of high performance as those used by top-class researchers overseas.



Transmission electron micrograph of crack tip dislocations (linear defects of atom positions) and their 3D image reconstructed by electron tomography in a Si single crystal (Masaki Tanaka, et al)

## Bus Stop Queue Visualization With "itocon"

A team of students in Professor Yutaka Arakawa's laboratory at the Faculty of Information Science and Electrical Engineering has developed “itocon,” a system that provides real-time queue information on bus stops at Kyūdai-Gakkentoshi Station and Ito Campus Center Zone for students and faculty who commute to Ito Campus. “itocon” visualizes the current queue length in real-time and also provides past queue length data for each departure time at the bus stops. Based on the past information, commuters can better stagger their commuting hours to avoid peak traffic periods. Going forward, sensors for measuring queue length will be installed at other bus stops on campus. Furthermore, the team plans to provide further predictive congestion information to support a shift toward a “new normal” based on information technology.



A bus stop with queue sensors installed

## All Aboard the AI BUS

Aimo, a campus shuttle service at Kyushu University, is Japan's first attempt at an on-demand bus service that uses AI to predict optional routes and calculate vehicle locations. It is also our first full-fledged example of social implementation since the university declared its plans to become a model campus for demonstration experiments.

## The Future of Energy Is Here

Next-Generation Fuel Cell Research Center (NEXT-FC) conducts closely coordinated industry-academia-government collaborative research aimed at full-scale dissemination of next-generation fuel cells. Pictured below are two fuel cell vehicles and a large 250kW-class solid oxide fuel cell (SOFC) power generation system.



## A New Integrated Platform for a New Energy Paradigm

The Kyushu University Platform of Inter-/Transdisciplinary Energy Research (Q-PIT) integrated researchers across different university departments to design a new concept for future energy systems and is working towards a paradigm shift in the way we think about energy for technology, industry, and society.

## Exploration of the Sea and Ships on the Ground

The Seakeeping and Manoeuvring Basin / High Speed Circulating Water Channel make Kyushu University unique as the only university in Japan to have two experimental research facilities related to ships and floating bodies. The ship model basin is one of the largest in the nation, while the water channel can generate very fast flows.

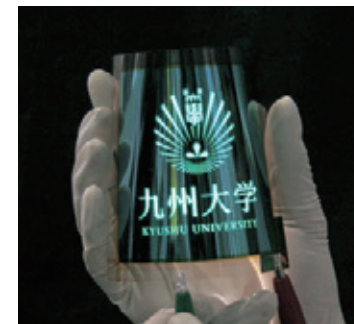






## Groundbreaking Organic Materials and Devices for Future Electronics

Highly efficient smartphone screens, roll-up televisions, and ultra-thin lighting panels. Carbon is making all these electronics possible, and at the forefront of basic research is the Center for Organic Photonics and Electronics Research. Bringing together experts in theory, chemistry, and physics, Distinguished Professor Chihaya Adachi's team is uncovering how to connect carbon and other atoms to create new organic molecules and electronics with unique properties for applications from organic LEDs and energy storage to lasers and biocompatible devices.



## Toward Better Health With Functional Foods

Aiming to improve our health through what we eat, researchers recently found that a soy-derived protein fragment known as a dipeptide, reaches the brain intact after ingestion and improves working and long-term memory in mice treated to simulate Alzheimer's disease. "If these benefits carry over to humans, this could lead us to functional foods to help prevent degradation of, or even improve, our memories," says Toshiro Matsui, professor in the Faculty of Agriculture.

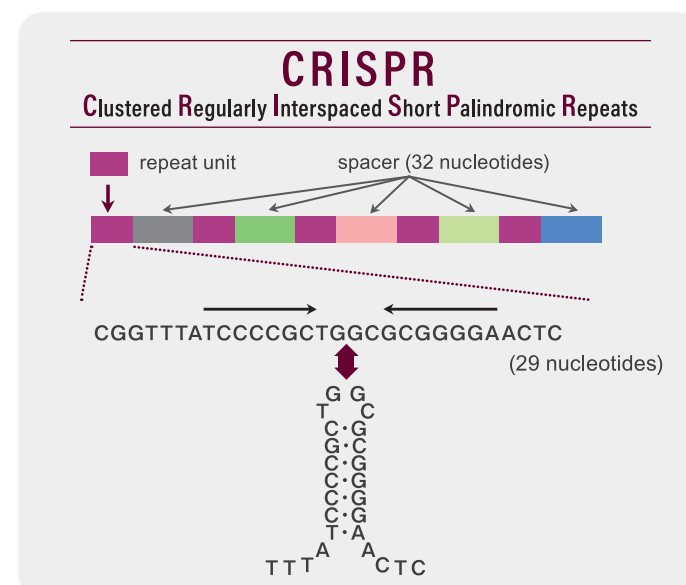
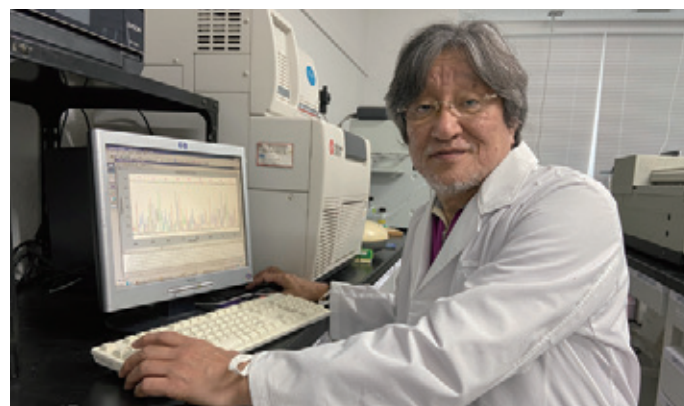


# Research in Focus

## Mr. Crispr's Basic Genome Discovery Linked to Nobel Prize in Chemistry

The 2020 Nobel Prize in Chemistry has been awarded to two researchers for the development of an improved CRISPR/Cas9 gene-editing method. However, the repeated sequence of DNA that forms the basis for CRISPR technology was first discovered by Prof. Yoshizumi Ishino of Kyushu University's Faculty of Agriculture. Prof. Ishino discovered unusual DNA sequences while analyzing *E. coli* genes more than thirty years ago and found that they contained conserved clusters of repeated sequences at regular length intervals. These specialized stretches of DNA were later named "CRISPR," which, together with accompanying Cas proteins, were revealed to be an adaptive, biological defense mechanism. This genome editing technology was invented by applying the

principles he developed. "I am delighted that my research has had a hand in making a technology that has been valued for its positive impact on humanity. I believe it's important to stay the course of your research, even if at first you don't know how it will help," Prof. Ishino commented. His is an excellent example of the extraordinary potential of basic research.



## Research Institute of Advanced Electric Propulsion Aircrafts

This institute is researching and developing electric vehicles based on superconducting technology that combines superconducting motors and generators that enable high power.



Flying Car (Image)  
©SkyDrive

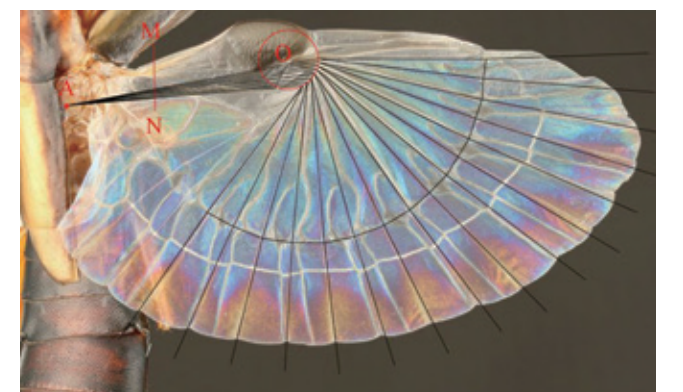
## Working Together With Communities to Unveil the Mechanism of Disease

The Hisayama study is a population-based prospective cohort study of cardiovascular disease, dementia, and lifestyle-related diseases in the town of Hisayama in Fukuoka, Japan. For over 50 years since the study began in 1961, the study has conducted an epidemiological survey to observe all residents in Hisayama aged 40 years and over and has a 70-80% participation rate and over a 99% follow-up rate, producing long-lasting and highly accurate results.



## Learning Origami Tricks From Insect Wings

Studying the sophisticated folding of earwig wings, Kazuya Saito, lecturer in the Faculty of Design, and collaborators developed a generalized design method for highly compact deployable structures. "Using software we created to automatize the design process, we can now apply the most compact wing folding in the insect world to a wide range of applications," explains Saito.



Schematic of the new design method for an earwig-inspired fan shown projected onto the hind wing of an earwig (*Proreus simulans*).  
Credit: Kazuya Saito



Research at Kyushu University

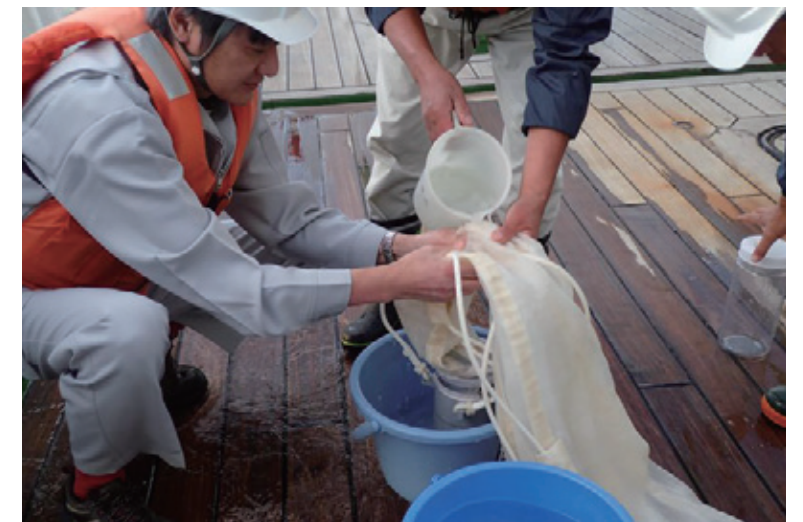




Reading a picture book to promote the importance of safety and hygiene for children in India

## Joining the Global Fight on Plastic Waste

Kyushu University represents an alliance for research on marine plastics pollution in Southeast Asia, namely Thailand, and is working together with seven other organizations including the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The university has been selected for joint international science and technology cooperation for global issues as part of the government-backed initiative Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development (SATREPS) (\*).



Prof. Atsuhiko Isobe retrieves microplastics collected from the ocean during a survey aboard a research vessel.

(\*)Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development

# Solving Global Issues

## Design for SDGs: Creative Solutions to Sustainable Development

By actively collaborating with local communities, NPOs, industries, universities, and international organizations, the SDGs Design Unit of the Faculty of Design positions itself as a social platform pursuing “solutional Design” to social issues. As a recent project, the unit conducted the 2<sup>nd</sup> SDGs Design International Awards 2020 on the theme "Overcoming the Pandemic, Design for Evolution" to encourage students across the globe to apply their design skills to create new, bold, and innovative solutions.



## Tackling the SDGs

The Kyushu University Institute for Asian and Oceanian Studies (Q-AOS), established in April 2019, is tackling the SDGs by creating a new academic field that will open the future and contribute to the resolution of social issues in Asian and Oceanian countries, from the SDGs to issues expected to be faced tomorrow. In September 2020, Q-AOS held a symposium on the theme of “Living with Infectious Diseases: What is a sustainable society after COVID-19?” The symposium featured interdisciplinary sessions and lectures by those who are closely involved in six main areas of activity of the organization. The speakers included well-known researchers around the world and top experts at the forefront of industry in addition to students, faculty and staff of Kyushu University. Q-AOS is committed to interdisciplinary exchanges, integrated research, and educational activities for the further promotion of the SDGs and “Future SDGs.”



## Ubiquitous CO<sub>2</sub> Capture for Mitigating Climate Change and Beyond

Despite worldwide efforts, reductions in carbon dioxide emissions alone are insufficient for suppressing global warming to 1.5 °C to manage climate change as recommended by the IPCC\*<sup>1</sup>. To overcome these shortfalls, negative emission strategies such as through technologies that remove CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere—known as direct air capture or DAC—are essential, and Associate Professor Shigenori Fujikawa of the I<sup>2</sup>CNER\*<sup>2</sup> believes polymer membranes hold the answer. “High-performance membranes may contribute to the new technology,” says Fujikawa. Fujikawa’s group calculated that multiple stages of air separation by membranes with state-of-the-art performance can produce a concentrated CO<sub>2</sub> gas stream of nearly 40% CO<sub>2</sub> starting from air with only 0.04% of CO<sub>2</sub>, resulting in net negative emissions even when considering the energy used. By developing membrane-based systems that can be deployed almost anywhere, the researchers are aiming for “Ubiquitous CO<sub>2</sub> Capture” from the atmosphere for recycling into valuable chemicals.



Ubiquitous CO<sub>2</sub> capture: a practical way to create a circular economy in which CO<sub>2</sub> is recycled as a resource.

\*<sup>1</sup> Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change  
\*<sup>2</sup> International Institute for Carbon-Neutral Energy Research

## Delivering to the World Webinars That Connect Asia Kyushu University Asia Week 2020

With the concept of "Creating with Asia," Fukuoka City holds an Asian Party every year from September to October, and it bustles with lively events where you can experience the present of Asia as a social gathering platform for people, goods, and information in Asia. As the first attempt at Kyushu University, Asia Week 2020 was held in a webinar format from September 1 to 12, 2020, to connect with Asia, talk about Asia, and experience Asia. A cumulative total of over 2,500 people took part in this event under the theme of “Universities to Grow Social Impact” Welcoming Shigeru Aoyagi, Director of the Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education of UNESCO Bangkok, participants actively discussed the initiatives for SDGs and their efforts to achieve the SDGs. At the first joint symposium with Seoul National University, experts made presentations in three breakout sessions, "Medicine," "Environmental and Social Sustainability at Different Spatial Scales," and "Materials Science and Engineering," providing an opportunity to further develop cooperation between the two universities. A dialogue session that conveys by students the late Dr. Nakamura's will, "Walk together, live here, and illuminate the future," was held on the last day of the Asia Week. Dr. Tetsu Nakamura was a graduate of the School of Medicine of Kyushu University and had devoted himself to support medical activities and irrigation projects in Afghanistan and Pakistan over a prolonged period.





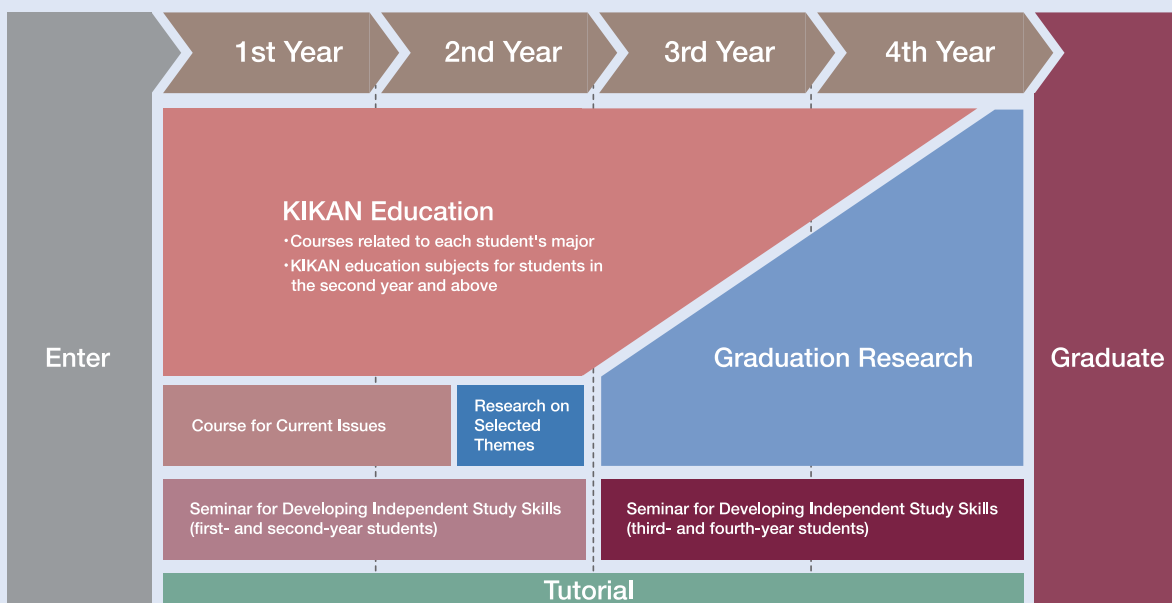


# Fostering Global Leaders

Leveraging the depth and breadth of its disciplines, Kyushu University is advancing educational programs that cross the boundaries of majors, from the humanities to the sciences. This philosophy is highlighted by the restructuring of the educational system to connect all stages of a student's development, from the undergraduate core curriculum—called KIKAN education—and specialty courses to graduate studies, through the establishment of the Faculty of Arts and Science in 2011 on the 100th anniversary of Kyushu University's founding. In this same spirit, Kyushu University opened the School of Interdisciplinary Science and Innovation, its twelfth undergraduate school, in April 2018 based on a completely new model for undergraduate education in Japan.

## KIKAN Education

Through the KIKAN education, students learn fundamental academic skills for new knowledge acquisition and problem solving, such as how to look, think, and learn critically. The KIKAN education combines general education subjects and departmental courses to train active learners for whom learning is at the core of their being. Active learners take initiative to challenge the status quo and are not afraid to take on unprecedented problems and new situations. The KIKAN education is also unique as it provides excellent collaborative opportunities for learning and discussion among groups of students across the humanities and the sciences such as Interdisciplinary Collaborative Learning of Social Issues and KIKAN education seminars.



Q KIKAN education



## School of Interdisciplinary Science and Innovation

The school aims to cultivate a global mindset in students, who are expected to be capable of identifying issues for themselves and working with others to solve current issues facing humankind. At the School of Interdisciplinary Science and Innovation, students develop their own problem-solving curriculum, engage in hands-on collaborative learning, and are required to study abroad. This allows students to gain a deeper cultural appreciation, improve their English language proficiency and develop the broad worldview needed to consider problems in their larger context.



## Distinctive Features

### 01 Curriculum blending the humanities with science

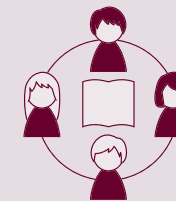
Cutting across the existing disciplines of the humanities, social sciences, and natural science, the curriculum will instill in students both humanities-based and scientific thinking, along with a diverse array of methodologies, and will feature learning based on practical challenges.



### 02 Collaborative learning (PBL/TBL\*)

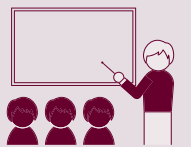
\*PBL: Problem-Based Learning; TBL: Team-Based Learning

The curriculum will incorporate collaborative learning in which students discuss themes in groups and learn by working in partnership with others, thereby cultivating a broad outlook, flexible thinking, and multifaceted insight that will enable students to look at things from a variety of angles.



### 03 Classes in English and Japanese

The curriculum will provide classes in both English and Japanese. In addition, intensive language courses that are tailored to each student's proficiency level will be offered. Through this multilingual curriculum, students will be able to improve their language skills to a practical level.



Q Interdisciplinary Science and Innovation



## Short-Term Study Programs for a Year Abroad at Kyushu U

On top of degree-seeking programs, Kyushu University also offers short-term study programs for exchange students from leading partner institutions around the world. Most representative are Japan in Today's World (JTW) and Japanese Language and Culture Course (JLCC), both of which run for a year to help students understand the basics of Japanese culture and society through both effective academic and experiencing activities.



Q Kyushu University short term programs





# The Authentic Japanese Study Abroad Experience: A Unique Curriculum in a Unique Environment

In this issue, we sat down with three international students studying at Kyushu University to talk about all things study abroad—why they chose Japan, what it's like living here, and what international student support is available on Ito Campus.

## Q. Why did you choose Kyushu University?

*“The main reason I chose Kyushu University is that I thought I would get a more hands-on education here than at other universities.”*

— Geofanny



**Billy:** I came here to conduct research in signal processing and machine learning, a field in which Japan particularly excels. I was also interested in Japan as the world leader in research on realizing “Society 5.0,” an initiative being promoted by the Japanese government. Additionally, Kyushu University has laboratories that are well suited to my research goals.

**Michaela:** I became interested in Japan the day I discovered the work of author Haruki Murakami. As I started looking into ways of visiting Japan, I found out about the Kyushu University JTW program (short-term study abroad course).

## Q. What was it about the Kyushu University curriculum that made you want to study here?

**Geofanny:** IUP (International Undergraduate Program) at Kyushu University is good because it lets you interact with undergraduate students from other faculties, including the humanities. The program is fleshed out and includes classes that help students improve different skills, such as giving presentations. I am learning about bioresources and the environment, but my studies aren't limited to courses inside my biology major. I am also taking a wide range of subjects that include the humanities, economics, and international law, all topics that will be useful in the real world.

**Billy:** What makes Kyushu University unique in comparison to British universities is its research system. In the UK, I don't think I ever saw a group of faculty and students across different years, both undergraduate and postgraduate, collaborate on research like they do here at Kyushu. I think this system might be unique to Japan.

*“JTW curriculum is based on the cultural experience of study trips and field trips, which I like because I can interact with both Japanese students and other international students.”*

— Michaela



**Michaela:** I majored in anthropology in Sweden, and from that perspective, I think these kinds of interaction and fieldwork are great ways to learn. We get to go outside the school and experience things like kimono and tea ceremony, which I think is very important for understanding the culture.

## Q. What were your first impressions of Japan and Kyushu University?

**Geofanny:** I was impressed by the sheer natural beauty around campus, so I like taking walks around the area.

**Billy:** It was like being inside a Japanese movie. Mountains, bamboo groves, rice fields—you really feel like, “This is Japan!”

## Q. What do you think of your classmates?

**Geofanny:** I have plenty of classmates from different countries, each with diverse backgrounds and ways of thinking, which has helped me to start viewing things from different perspectives. They all work really hard and are goal-oriented, and everyone works together to help each other.

**Billy:** When I first came to Japan, I was pretty nervous that I wouldn't be able to communicate with the people here, but in reality, I realized that I had been worrying for no reason. Whenever something went wrong, I was always surprised—in a good way—by how kind and helpful people were.

**Michaela:** All of my JTW classmates are international students, and

everyone is really laid back. I feel like we can discuss most things, and I learn a lot from them. I like all of my classmates—and professors!—and it really feels like one big family to me.

## Q. What have you enjoyed about the university's support system for international students?

*“Whether it's looking for an apartment or making pension payments, the ISRSC\* has always been there to help me and made my student life a lot easier and more comfortable.”*

— Billy



\*International Student and Researcher Support Center

**Geofanny:** Kyushu University's support system is fantastic because it matches Japanese student volunteers with international students. And the ISRSC makes it easy for international students to get help with important things like applying for scholarships.

## Q. What are your plans and goals after graduation?

**Geofanny:** I would like to go on to the master's program if I can get a scholarship. If that doesn't work out, I want to find a job related to what I'm studying.

**Billy:** After completing my doctoral program, I would like to work in a field that is directly related to my research. Coming to Japan, I've gained a unique perspective on working in a different cultural environment, forms of collaboration, and international research, so whatever I do, I want to further my career in an environment where I can make the most of my experiences here.

**Michaela:** I'm hoping I can do something that combines all of the things I'm interested in, such as French literature and anthropology.

### Billy

From the United Kingdom  
Graduate School of Information  
Science and Electrical  
Engineering

### Michaela

From Sweden  
JTW (Japan in Today's World)

### Geofanny

From Indonesia  
School of Agriculture  
International Undergraduate  
Programs (In English)

## The international alumni interview



### Daniel Rakove

From USA  
JTW  
Current Position :  
Consul for Political and Economic  
Affairs, U.S. Consulate Fukuoka.

### 1. Please tell briefly about your work.

I have worked in the U.S. Department of State for 11 years, serving in Bangladesh, Mongolia, South Korea, Washington D.C., and now, Fukuoka, Japan.

### 2. What precisely does your job entail?

I meet with people from all backgrounds across the Kyushu-Yamaguchi region, trying to build ties, and learn from them about pressing issues, such as new

developments in science and technology, business, and politics. Then, I try to report on what I have learned to colleagues in the U.S. government and explain why it is important. I also try to assist American businesses. In February, I traveled to Yokohama to help with the evacuation of Americans from the Diamond Princess.

### 3. What makes your job worthwhile?

I love learning foreign languages and meeting all sorts of people. In 2019, I arranged an English-language startup pitch contest, which attracted some incredible entrepreneurs from around Kyushu (including from Kyushu University) and from Busan. This was the professional highlight of my time here.

### 4. What are your career goals?

As a diplomat, I am never sure where I will be in a few years' time. But wherever I go, I want to break down barriers and build consensus through dialogue.

### 5. What are the useful things acquired from your study at Kyushu University?

My time at Kyushu University helped give me the confidence that I could live abroad as a diplomat. Also, the friendships I made there have really lasted.

### 6. Would you give a message to current and future international students at Kyushu University?

Challenge yourself and take chances.

Scan this QR code for more details,  
including a long version of the three students' talk.







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