

## The Program for Promoting the Enhancement of Research Universities

# To Be a Leading Research University in the World

MEXT established the program for promoting the enhancement of research universities with the aim of improving the research capabilities of universities and research institutions. TMDU was selected as one of 22 universities and institutions in FY2013.

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WHEN THE UNIVERSITY was selected as a leading research university (RU), a number of activities of our university has been scored including the ability to obtain research grants, the number of citations in research papers, achievements in academic-industrial cooperation and other indices. The score was also assigned to a hearing. In this way, TMDU was selected as a leading research university, based on a visualization of its capabilities, with a focus on improving its international competitiveness. Japanese Government support three hundred million yen per year will be provided for ten years, with the securing and utilizing of research support personnel such as URAs (University Research Administrators) as a precondition. The aim of this program is to provide a research environment that achieves higher level outcomes by employing RAs who will handle research strategy, intellectual property management and so on, so that researchers can focus on their research.

TMDU holds first place in Asia in terms of citation rates per paper, and the eighth place in Japan in university ranking. Furthermore, in terms of RU projects with a particular emphasis on internationalization, TMDU has international exchange agreements with 78 universities in 28 countries with a focus on Thailand, Ghana and Chile, in which overseas offices and research center have been set up. Through joint research, clinical training and so on, the university is undertaking personnel exchanges and training. Based on this strength, TMDU has established a university-wide Research University Development Office under the direction of President Ohyama to further enhance our research capabilities. The office is working to improve the university's research environment and to reorganize its research system.

TMDU's initiative to enhance its research involves five areas; obtaining superior personnel, improving the research environment, strengthening governance, promoting aca-

demical-industrial cooperation, and establishing a URA Office. In order to obtain superior personnel, the university is establishing an environment that can attract highly capable young researchers by adopting an international recruitment tenure track system and by offering new graduate school courses and so on. To improve the research environment, the university aims to create a better working environment by developing our Research Center, and by introducing work sharing for female researchers and staff who are facing to their life events. To strengthen governance, the university will enable speedy reform including expanding the annual salary system and revising the personnel regulations, as well as establishing new fields and centers and augmenting staff at the President's discretion. Considerable improvements have already been achieved through the establishment of inter-professional medical and dental education and reorganization of the graduate schools, but the policy of the university is to focus on strengthening its research capability and flexible working circumstances. In pursuit of academic-industrial cooperation, the university is accepting special graduate research students from private enterprise, establishing new academic-industrial cooperation accounts, formulating and implementing medical COI (conflict of interest) management guidelines, and introducing evaluation indices for academic-industrial cooperation. TMDU is further developing its existing Industry Alliance Division, and is considering establishing an Innovation Promotion Agency to support the international commercialization of the university's germinal research in advanced medical care, medicines, and medical equipment in a streamlined manner.

The URA Office is the agency tasked with cross-organizational support for these four initiatives. The TMDU-URA Office implemented as part of this project comprises three divisions, (1) the Research Expenses Acquisition Branch,

(2) the Research Capability Enhancement Branch, and (3) the Advanced Medicine Development Branch. The office will be staffed by specialists in each field who will support research activities. After five years, the URA Office and TMDU Research Organization will be merged, with the aim of further reducing the distance between research and academia-alliance.

These five initiatives will not be pursued piecemeal. By undertaking them simultaneously, the university will generate a high degree of synergy, and the initiatives are expected to further strengthen TMDU's research capability. Besides reinforcing the university's strengths, this project must also aim to overcome our weaknesses. For example, TMDU had issues with insufficient management staff to handle the procurement and management of research funds and to manage and leverage its intellectual property. Therefore URAs, with their business mindset, will support research management from acquisition of research funds to commercialization of germinal research.

Furthermore, the Public Relations Office was reorganized as the Public Relations Division in April 2013 in order to raise the profile of TMDU. It will strengthen the university's external communications in Japan and overseas to improve the visibility of TMDU, commensurate with its highly acclaimed research outcomes. To implement the program for promoting the enhancement of research universities, communication between faculty and staff across the university and a shared understanding of the issues are necessary. It is also important for all the faculty and staff members to be aware of the benefits for them of improved research capabilities.

Some may think that strengthening research capabilities supports not only basic research fields, but also clinical research ones. In the case of clinician-led studies, research center for Medical and Dental Sciences can help with measurements. This will reduce the burden on clinicians. We could also raise the education level by understanding the RU project.

### The Activities and Personnel of the URA Office

