

A Message from the President on April 1, Academic Year 2022
“Cooperation with Society”

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As we begin a new academic year, I would like to share the direction in which I believe TMDU should advance from now on.

In October 2019 I threw my hat into the ring as a candidate for the position of TMDU president, with a tenure beginning in academic year 2020. At that time my slogan was to “Join forces to create the future”. However, my assumption of office in April 2020 coincided with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and I felt this called for a head-on approach to the crisis. Mindful that “every crisis is an opportunity,” and inspired by the slogan, “Join forces to protect patients and coworkers from COVID-19,” I urged everyone at TMDU to tackle the pandemic with the utmost vigor. I am deeply grateful to all of you for your endorsement of our policies, for your professionalism, and hard work. Thanks to your efforts, many lives have been saved and we have earned much support and praise from society. Through this, we also recognized that our selection as a Designated National University Corporation was due not only to our lengthy track record of educational and research achievements but also that our contributions to society played a large part in this decision.

This experience has renewed my conviction that TMDU’s ultimate objective is not accomplished solely by the achievement of excellent educational and research results but encompasses the application of those results in ways that maximize their benefit to society. While medical and dental treatment at TMDU Hospital is a direct expression of our social mission, I also believe the development of human resources and the social implementation of research through industry-government-academia collaboration are indispensable contributions to society. Hence TMDU’s vision: “Cultivating Professionals with Knowledge and Humanity, thereby Contributing to People’s Well-being.”

In my message on April 1, AY 2021, I referred to playwright Maurice Maeterlinck’s *The Blue Bird*, whose theme is that the blue bird of happiness is at home rather than far away, and I emphasized “cooperation within TMDU.” The idea was to start by addressing matters that are nearby within easy reach.

The contest we launched to encourage internal collaboration has elicited new initiatives, such as cross-departmental gatherings of students, research chats, and interprofessional rounds in the intensive care unit. We will continue promoting collaboration within TMDU this academic year as

well. For example, we plan to hold a regular event in the faculty lounge on the 26th floor of the M&D Tower for exchanges among researchers.

Going forward, I would like to expand this TMDU collaboration circle to include collaboration with external parties. This year's theme is "Collaboration with Society", and I would like TMDU to emphasize collaboration with academia, industry, local government, ministries and agencies of the Japanese government, and other parties more than ever before.

TMDU became a Designated National University Corporation from this April. We were selected as one of Japan's 10 national universities with the potential to offer world-leading education and research.

As you can see in this poster, TMDU's goal as a Designated National University Corporation is to "realize Total Health Care for the world and humankind across the generations". By "Total Health Care," we mean health care that addresses all generations, all places, and all diseases. The time is ripe for the launch of TMDU's various initiatives in cooperation with society to create one of the world's foremost healthcare science hubs staffed by "Professionals with Knowledge and Humanity" fostered by TMDU.

Moreover, 2022 is the first year of the fourth medium-term goals and plans for national universities in Japan since their incorporation. In the preamble to the medium-term goals, we have included the key items on which we will focus in the fields of education, research, medical/ treatment, and collaboration with society, in view of the designated national university concept. TMDU's medium-term goals and plans can be seen on the TMDU website.

In terms of social impact, the war in Ukraine is casting a long shadow. Images disseminated via social media vividly depict the horrific conflict, with its numerous casualties. This war, together with the COVID-19 pandemic, indicates that we are undoubtedly at a turning point in history. And this year marks a turning point for not just TMDU, but for universities throughout Japan.

In recent discussion about universities, you may well have come across the term "University Fund" in the media. The Japanese government is establishing a 10-trillion-yen fund to support universities that satisfy certain criteria, with the aim of cultivating world-class research universities. The government refers to the contemplated accreditation framework, albeit tentatively, as the "International Outstanding Research University System (provisional name)."

This is a more ambitious concept than a designated national university. The major difference is that a university accredited as an "International Outstanding Research University" will be eligible to receive tens of billions of yen from the University Fund. TMDU's accreditation would not only open the door to support from the university fund but would also likely facilitate access to funding from other sources in society, possibly enabling our university to acquire an additional campus. This would solve the financial and space issues that have long been challenges for TMDU. It should be noted that "International Outstanding Research Universities" are required to make a range of

paradigm-changing contributions to society, which exceed the scope of TMDU acting alone. To gain accreditation, I believe it is essential for TMDU to further deepen our industry-government-academia collaboration.

However, whether we receive accreditation as an “International Outstanding Research University” or not is only one means, as I believe the essential value of a university is determined by the extent to which it contributes to the world and humanity.

To reiterate, thanks to the cooperation and dedication of each and every one of us, TMDU was able to make a valuable contribution to society during the period when responding to COVID-19 was the dominant theme.

Now that we can envisage a society where we may coexist with COVID-19, I believe it is time for us to take the next step forward. This year, as we seek to advance to the next stage of our journey, it is my earnest desire that TMDU will make steady progress, one step at a time, as a designated national university. To accomplish this goal, I would sincerely appreciate your cooperation.