

Inauguration of Tokyo College: A new platform for global collaboration and communication

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The University of Tokyo has established a new institute, named Tokyo College, to promote interdisciplinary collaboration, bringing together leading scholars, young researchers and public intellectuals from around the world. Tokyo College aims to generate new knowledge to contribute to the creation inclusive society and spark deeper public engagement with the University.

Tokyo College is a presidential initiative led by Professor Masashi Haneda, a historian and former director of the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia and executive vice president. Professor Sir Anthony Leggett, joint recipient of the 2003 Nobel Prize “for pioneering contributions to the theory of superconductors and superfluids,” is honorary director.

Other members of Tokyo College will include UTokyo Special Emeritus Professors Takaaki Kajita (recipient of the 2015 Nobel Prize for Physics) and Yoshinori Tokura (recipient of multiple international research awards). Fellows will be invited from among the world’s leading researchers and intellectuals with the aim of stimulating interdisciplinary discussion and collaboration.

“Tokyo College will bring together leading researchers and intellectuals from all parts of the world to create together a vision of what the world could be and lay out a pathway to realizing that vision,” says Professor Haneda. “Interaction between leading international scholars, young researchers at the forefront of their fields, students from the university and others will be an innovative spark that ignites new ideas that we hope will spread throughout the university and be shared with our communities far beyond the campus. Public meetings are an important aspect of Tokyo College.”

Tokyo College will focus on “The Earth and Human Society in 2050” as the main theme to be tackled in the mid-to-long term. Under this main theme, there will be four priority areas;

1. Digital Revolution and Future of Humanity
2. Tackling the Planetary Boundaries through Interdisciplinary Approaches
3. Japan Viewed from Inside and Outside
4. Humanities in 2050 - World Philosophy, World History and World Literature -

Other than these four areas, Tokyo College also plans to invite excellent researchers who can share the "Joy of Discovery and Power of Knowledge" through seminars, public lectures and collaborative research.

“I empathize with the University’s passion to serve Japan and the world by driving societal change,” says Professor Leggett. “Tokyo College will serve as a platform to provide new perspectives and wisdom that will contribute to the creation of an inclusive society. I am looking forward to collaborating with the members of Tokyo College and the University of Tokyo.”

“Our university charter calls for us to strive to become a global center for knowledge creation,” says UTokyo President Makoto Gonokami. “This new initiative will give leading researchers and intellectuals the freedom to focus on their research, pushing the boundaries of human knowledge. By promoting international and interdisciplinary cooperation, we hope that researchers affiliated with Tokyo College will partner with the public and private sectors to tackle today’s most challenging issues.”

Tokyo College will be located under the UTokyo Institutes of Advanced Study (UTIAS), an umbrella organization which already includes the Kavli Institute for the Physics and Mathematics of the Universe (Kavli IPMU), the International Research Center for Neurointelligence (IRCN) and the Integrated Research System for Sustainability Science (IR3S).

Tokyo College Website
<http://www.tc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/en/>

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Comment from the Director of Tokyo College
(Masashi Haneda, Executive Vice President of UTokyo)

Tokyo College is a brand new scheme of collaboration for members of UTokyo to discuss and create a shared vision of an ideal future with people from across the globe and to take action together to pursue its realization. Leading scholars, promising young researchers and influential intellectuals from overseas will gather and stay at Tokyo College. There, they will have frequent opportunities to exchange ideas with our scholars and students, creating synergy and generating new knowledge, which will help us shape our future. Knowledge created by these activities will be delivered immediately to the public through lectures and seminars organized by Tokyo College.



What makes Tokyo College special? It is the spark of ideas created through the intense interaction of cutting-edge research. It is the inspiration of new learning that comes from flexible and innovative ways of thinking. It is the ingenious speculation of intellectuals backed by the practical experiences gained through their earnest engagements in society.

We are thinking of introducing a number of new and exciting initiatives at Tokyo College, which goes beyond the traditional framework of a typical university. Please stay tuned in.

Comment from the Honorary Director of Tokyo College
(Sir Anthony Leggett, recipient of the 2003 Nobel Prize,
Professor, University of Illinois)

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Comment from Makoto Gonokami, President of the University of Tokyo

Today, advancement in information and communication technologies such as computers and internet, brought about by the semiconductor electronics born in the middle of the twentieth century, have become indispensable part of our society and economy. The speed in which these new technologies evolve and spread across the world is becoming ever faster.



Every second, an enormous amount of data from all parts of the world is being collected through the internet and accumulated in cyberspace. The recent advancement in AI technology is opening up the possibility for us to fully utilize this big data. It is creating an unprecedented situation in the history of humanity, where the physical world in which we live fuses with the cyber space in a very sophisticated manner. In this Digital Revolution, the source of economic value will shift from physical resources to data and ideas. It will bring about a disruptive transformation to our world and how we relate to one another. It is not easy for us to predict where this transformation will lead us and our planet.

However, I believe that this transformation has a great potential to help us realize a better future for all, empowering us with tools and ideas to overcome difficult global issues, including disparities of many kinds, climate change, anti-foreignism, national and regional conflicts. We can realize a future where diversity is embraced and where every individual is able to take part in society on their own terms, at the same time achieving sustainable and harmonious growth of the humanity and the planet. On the other hand, this transformation could also make our world much more unstable. The Digital revolution could result in the critical escalation of existing global issues, by creating new problems like the monopolization of data.

What should we do to make sure that this transformation can project us to a better future for all? I believe that it is important for each individual to consider this time of change as a chance, and have the courage to strive for a positive outcome. Then, we must share this will and desire with individuals from all walks of life, work together by combining each other's strength and create a large momentum for change. The University of Tokyo is determined to provide a platform for such activities and become a driving force of social innovation. Throughout its 142-year history, the University of Tokyo has contributed to humanity by adding to the diversity of knowledge through the unique collaboration of traditional Japanese scholarship and the scholarship of the world. The Inauguration of Tokyo College is an ambitious step to further enhance our strength and capacity to contribute to the creation of an inclusive future.

Tokyo College aims to create new knowledge and communicate it to the global public, by bringing together excellent leading researchers and intellectuals, from broad range of fields and from around the world. It also aims to create strong synergy with the scholars of the University of Tokyo, crossing the boundaries of traditional disciplines to create a wellspring of new academic ideas. Tokyo College will provide an exciting environment for students where they can constantly access leading researchers and cutting-edge research and be motivated to become global leaders.

The most important role of the Tokyo College is communication. We want to communicate the importance of appreciating the value of cutting-edge knowledge and the environment that creates it. We hope to share with a global public the excitement, profoundness, and breadth of academic pursuits carried out over a variety of the time scale. Through the activities of Tokyo College, we hope that the global public will become a part of our global community, and partners as we work together to create a better future for all.