

Tohoku Forum for Creativity, Frontiers of Brain Science

Tools & Technologies (Workshops, July 21-24; Symposium July 25-27)

Opening remarks, Susumu Satomi (President of Tohoku University)

July 25, 2015, 13:30-13:40

As the president of Tohoku University, I would like to warmly welcome you to the Tohoku Forum for Creativity Frontiers of Brain Science program. Today's symposium is part of the first event in this program, and is entitled "Tools and Technologies". This event consists of two parts, today's symposium, and an accompanying 4-day workshop which concluded yesterday. The TFC was established at Tohoku University in order to provide new opportunities for world leading scientists to interact with young students and researchers in Japan. The Frontiers of Brain Science program consists of three major international symposia, along with other related events. The content of the program was specifically designed to promote the development of new ideas for the fundamental understanding of the brain and, ultimately, humanity, and also with the aim of establishing new directions for future biomedical research.

One of the guiding principles of Tohoku University is our "open door" philosophy. We never close our door to people who seek knowledge and who wish to promote the welfare of humanity. We are proud that over 100 years ago we were the first university in Japan to accept female students, despite the strong objection made by the Japanese government at that time. Since then, we have continued to prioritize equal opportunities for all, and gladly welcome foreign students and scholars from all over the world. The establishment of the TFC is a natural outcome of the culture at Tohoku University.

Brain science is a fascinating field of research. While the goal of all brain scientists is the same, to gain a deeper understanding of the brain, the methodologies which are used to achieve this aim vary widely. For example, scientists may use psychological methods, molecular biology methods, electrophysiology methods, optical imaging methods and material science methods with which to study the brain. Therefore, brain science requires integration of multiple disciplines and the field never closes its door to anyone; much like Tohoku University. In addition, I would also like to emphasize that our university has a strong tradition in brain science, evidenced by the fact that the first domestic electroencephalograph was established by Prof. Koichi Motokawa, the 12th President of Tohoku University, and the Global COE program on neuroscience was conducted here from 2006 to 2012. Therefore, Tohoku University is an ideal place to hold a program like the Frontiers of Brain Science.

The general organizers of the Frontiers of Brain Science program are two of our established faculty members, Toshio Iijima and Noriko Osumi, and this individual event is coordinated by Ko Matsui and Hiromu Tanimoto, who are still in their early 40s. This generation of researchers are destined to move the field forward and become the leading scientists in the next two decades, and therefore having the experience of organizing international conferences will certainly contribute to the building of their careers. In addition, I am told that even the younger generation, those who are still in graduate school and are the members of the Society for Young researchers on Neuroscience, are also actively participating in the coordination of the events, especially in the excursion planned on the last day of the Symposium. Bridging the gap between different generations of researchers is also one of the ultimate goals for the TFC events.

I truly hope that this event will lead to new academic insights, and that Tohoku University will be able to function as a hub for scientists both during this program, and in the future. In this spirit of academic endeavor, let us begin the Symposium.