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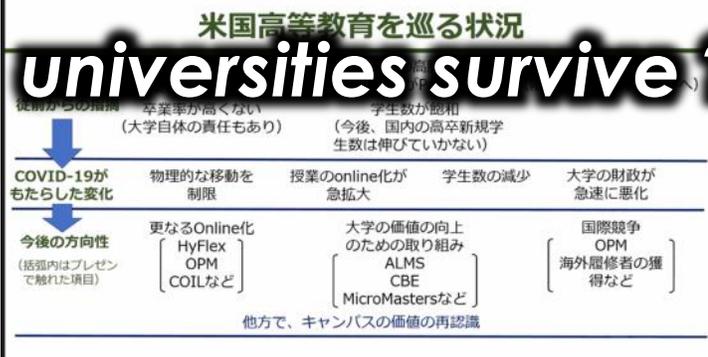
Where is higher education going Post COVID-19 ? How can Japanese universities survive ?

The Japanese University Network in the Bay Area (JUNBA) held its first webinar of 2021 on September 14. A total of 139 people, mainly Japanese university faculty and staff, participated.

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Where is higher education going Post COVID-19? How can Japanese universities survive?



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JUNBA promotes collaboration among Japanese universities that have offices in the US and supports their efforts at internationalization. This entails developing international human resources and industry-academia collaboration. We hope that this will further education and research in Japan and the United States, creating new industries.

“The latest trends in US higher education Post COVID-19” was the theme for the event with the goal of sharing COVID-19 countermeasures employed by US universities. Emerging educational trends in the US were also shared.

First, Tomohisa Koyama, the chairman of JUNBA and the Executive Director of Technology Partnership of Nagoya University, Inc. and Scott North, the director of JUNBA and the Regional Director of the Osaka University North American Center for Academic Initiatives, gave an overview of US higher education before and after the pandemic and introduced new online education methods (HyFlex, Learning

Management System (LMS) Etc.).

After that, Mr. Matthew J. Wilson, Dean of Temple University, Japan Campus, presented on the current situation of higher education in the United States with real-world examples.

During the panel discussion, questions and comments generally focused on the following three questions:

1. Will online education become a mainstay in the United States and the world, or will it play a supplementary role?
2. How can we enhance the value of higher education during this time of upheaval?
3. How will international competition in higher education change in the future? How can Japanese universities survive in such an environment?

There were lots of questions and insightful commentary. The first JUNBA Webinar ended with a lively discussion aided by the expertise of each panelist. The second webinar will be held on Monday, December 6th.

All 50 post-event questionnaire respondents rated the event as "very good" or "good". Below are some of their comments.

- It was useful to get a comprehensive overview (and not just fragmentary info) of how US universities have responded to the pandemic.
- I was able to grasp the situation surrounding COVID-19 in the United States, and found that it was almost the same as the situation in Japan. However, I felt that the United States has had a higher sense of urgency.
- It was a useful online seminar for the first time in a long time. It was good that everyone was talking openly and honestly. Thank you very much.
- The first time I've been able to hear the latest trends, including the local situation.
- The content was easy to understand as a whole, and I realized that online initiatives and mandatory vaccines are still progressing in the US. Also, there were many words I saw for the first time, and it was good to know the issues being tackled at the university level.

- Since it was a panel discussion based on lectures and comments, it deepened my understanding.
- I learned a lot from hearing about various ways of thinking about online and face to face education.
- It was a good opportunity for me to learn and to change my attitude. Thank you.
- Many data based on the panelist's experience and specific examples were useful.
- I was able to know the status of leading US universities post-COVID.





The 2nd JUNBA Webinar 2021

(2021年度第二回JUNBA勉強会「コロナ禍における大学の国際活動と今後の展開
～州立・私立等の多様な米国大学から学ぶ最新事例～」)

December 6th, 2021

https://www.jspsusa-sf.org/pdfs/20211206_junba-webinar.pdf

Workshop for Japanese University Administrative Staff in the U.S. 2021

(2021年度在米大学職員研究会)

December 8th - 9th, 2021

<https://www.jspsusa-sf.org/news/?p=2340>

Winter Gathering of Japanese Researchers in the U.S.

(日本人研究者交流会・冬)

February 12th, 2022

Information sessions

December 16th, 2021 (University of California, San Diego)

Beginning of January, 2022 (University of California, Los Angeles)

Middle of January, 2022 (University of British Columbia)

Middle of January, 2022 (University of California, Davis)



JSPS Fellow in America



Collecting cave drip water samples

TOMOKO BELL

I received my Ph.D. in Earth Science at the University of Tokyo in 2018, and started the JSPS Oversea Research Fellowship (RRA) in 2020. Now, at the University of Guam, I am investigating the mid-Holocene climate using oxygen isotopes of Guam stalagmites and corals, to evaluate the impact of anthropogenic versus solar radiation change on Earth's climate. I am also serving in American Geophysical Union's ICON (Integrated, Coordinated, Open,

Networked) as Paleoceanography and Paleoclimatology section champion to facilitate the movement to connect society, science, and scientists with different expertise.

Q1: Why did you decide to research in the U.S.?

According to an article from Nature published in 2020, Japan has the lowest ratios of female scientists in the G20 countries (16.6%)¹. The article also emphasizes that Japan should embrace diversity and inclusion. Hendry (1995) stated that notions of hierarchy are extremely important in Japan², and invisible social pressure to follow this tradition in conservative academic institutions can be challenging to younger Japanese scientists, especially female scientists.

I strongly feel that early career researchers in Japan should be proactive in learning from the U.S., one of the leading countries in equality (i.e. the Equality Act), to help make Japan more inclusive, energetic, and equitable in science. I am truly thankful that JSPS is facilitating a movement towards greater equality, and that I can be part of it.

Q2: What is your impression of the research environment in the U.S.?

The Japanese research environment is based on a hierarchical/vertical relationship. Directions of discussion or arrangement of experiments/projects tend to be determined based on this principle by default. I received the impression that the U.S. research environment is much more horizontal, where early career researchers are given more opportunities to freely express ideas and enjoy discussions with senior researchers.

COVID19 caused many uncertainties and anxiety with my postdoctoral project. My postdoc mentor, Dr. John Jenson at the University of Guam, always encourages me to persist during difficult times. With his recommendation, I was recently able to achieve one of my long-time dreams during this pandemic: studying with planetary scientists at NASA JPL.

I joined the Planetary Science Summer School (PSSS)³ this summer with 18 career researchers from U.S., India, and France possessing disparate expertises. We learned how to formulate a planetary mission together, and it was a most diverse and energetic environment. The technical skills we learned such as composing a hypothesis-based science traceability matrix, the processes employed for competed mission proposals, and the interplay and interdependence of subsystem for a space mission sharpened us to become robust critical thinkers. What amazed me most was the amount of support we were receiving from senior researchers.

Our mentors, Dr. Troy Hudson and Dr. Karl Mitchell at NASA JPL, taught us not only

science and engineering, they further trained us how to become a “scientist” who can think through logic puzzles regardless of the struggles. Moreover, we acquired the skills to effectively pitch our science story, cope with rejections, and stay resilient. I believe that the Japanese research environment can blossom and be energized by encouraging more horizontal relationships and creative training produced from a mentor’s true life experiences.



Surveying Jinapsan Cave in Guam

Q3: How do you take advantage of your experiences in the U.S. and apply it to your research or career?

The postdoctoral period is considered to be a critical time to define oneself as a researcher. Thanks to the fellowship from JSPS, I am very fortunate that I am affiliated with the Water and Environmental Research Institute (WERI) at the University of Guam, and received three months of career development training at NASA JPL.

Dr. Jenson describe an ethics of WERI as a public servant, meaning science should be conducted to help people and the public, not for personal fame or accomplishment.

Dr. Hudson and Dr. Mitchell at NASA JPL helped inspire my imagination and desire to take my knowledge and apply it to other worlds. I adore the friendships and collaborations I developed with former strangers in our diverse PSSS team class of 2021. Now we are a cohesive early career researcher team encouraging each other to walk towards our success. With this ethical framework, inspiration, friendships, and collaborations, I would like to apply my experience to pursue interdisciplinary research; breaking the border and putting different science disciplines together which have not been mixed before to create something surprising. In the future, I would love to join an interdisciplinary project

focusing on the comparison of Earth and other planets. In addition, I plan to continue leading efforts within the science community to promote peaceful and harmonious collaboration in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment.



Coral coring



YUTARO MORI

2020.04-

JSPS Postdoctoral Fellow for Research Abroad

2018.04-

Research Fellow, Division of Renal Medicine, Department of Medicine, Brigham and Women's Hospital/Harvard Medical School

2017.04-2018.03

Collaborator/Research Fellow, Division of Renal Medicine, Department of Medicine, Brigham and Women's Hospital/Harvard Medical School

2015.11-2017.03

Attending Physician, Department of Medicine, Tsuchiura Kyodo General Hospital

2012.04-2016.03

Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Nephrology, Graduate School of Medical and Dental Sciences, Tokyo Medical and Dental University

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3 Non-U.S. person who is not at a U.S. institution are ineligible to apply for PSSS. PSSS in 2021 was conducted via online due to COVID19

I am a Research Fellow in Department of Medicine, Brigham and Women's Hospital/Harvard Medical School. I am a nephrologist, and now working on pathophysiology of chronic kidney disease and human based disease modeling in the kidney. I focus on translational research in the kidney based on my strong clinical background. I received my M.D. from Tokyo Medical and Dental University (TMDU) School of Medicine in 2008 and my Ph.D. in Medical Science from Graduate School of Medical and Dental Sciences, TMDU in 2016.

I discovered that Kidney Injury Molecule-1 (KIM-1) expresses in the kidney proximal tubule early in diabetic kidney disease (DKD) and that KIM-1-mediated endocytosis of fatty acid-bound albumin into proximal tubule cells from formative urine causes tubulointerstitial inflammation and fibrosis, major manifestations of DKD. I also identified a specific small-molecule inhibitor for KIM-1 which ameliorates fibrosis and

inflammation of DKD. My research revealed the unknown disease mechanisms of DKD and ultimately “why proteinuria is detrimental for kidneys” which is a fundamental question of kidneys.

Q1. Why did you decide to research in the U.S.?

Ever since I was a child, I had a strong longing to conduct research abroad as a physician scientist. That was my initial impulse. When I received my Ph.D. in Japan, unfortunately, I have already started to realize the limitations of my own research topic at that time. I decided that the only way to fulfill my childhood dream and break out of my current situation was to study abroad.

DKD is the leading cause of end-stage kidney disease which requires renal replacement therapy (RRT) such as hemodialysis and kidney transplantation. More than 2.5 million people are receiving RRT all over the world. DKD has an unmet clinical need in order to prevent the increase of RRT. As a nephrologist, I have treated a tremendous number of patients with chronic kidney disease and with DKD. I had wondered why there was no aggressive treatment for DKD. I decided to conduct translational research in the U.S. to fight against DKD by connecting clinical practice and research.

Kidney Injury Molecule-1 (KIM-1) was found to be a scavenger receptor which is expressed at apical membrane of proximal tubules in injured kidneys.



Gordon Hall, Harvard Medical School

In clinical research, KIM-1 in blood and urine is reported to be increased early in human diabetes and can predict rate of progression of disease. So, I hypothesized that KIM-1 may play an important role for progression of DKD. My boss, Dr. Joseph V. Bonventre, and my senior, Dr. Hari Ichimura, at Harvard Medical School discovered KIM-1. With a view to conducting translational research on KIM-1, I joined this laboratory as a Research Fellow.

Q2. What is your impression of the research environment in the U.S.?

One of the main characteristics of the research environment in the U.S. is that research collaboration is very active when compared with that in Japan. I understand that this is because the barriers between disciplines are low. The other characteristic is diversity in many ways.

Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School are located at Boston. There are many academic institutions including Harvard and MIT. Research collaboration both within and between institutions is thriving here. I have been involved in multiple intra- and inter-institutional research collaboration. I don't see many barriers between disciplines. We can often join academic seminars which are open as interdisciplinary ones. We also have many chances to communicate with researchers in other fields. Therefore, research collaboration tends to be cross-sectional.

Moreover, the research field in the U.S. includes people from a variety of background. I have communicated with researchers from

more than 50 countries with different cultures, languages, religions, and values. In fact, I have seen how new innovations are born from the interaction of such a diverse group of people. The strength of the U.S. is its openness to diversity.

I actually enjoy this interdisciplinary and diverse research environment in the U.S., which eventually promotes my productivity.

Q3. How do you take advantage of your experiences in the U.S. and apply it to your research or career?

Here, I have learned how to survive as an academic scientist. I have learned that it is extremely important to keep the two wheels of research turning by getting grants and publishing good papers. To continue my research, I have also learned that we need to analyze and utilize our strengths. Ultimately, I would like to contribute to society by improving medical science through my research. My experience in the U.S. will lead me to give back to society as an independent scientist.



Bonventre Lab



Tokyo Tech

Tokyo Tech ANNEX Berkeley invites collaboration

Founded in 1881, Tokyo Institute of Technology (Tokyo Tech) is Japan's top national university for science and technology. To promote the Institute's research and education activities and invite collaboration with researchers and students around the world, Tokyo Tech has established strategic overseas hubs—Tokyo Tech ANNEXes—in Asia, Europe, and now North America. It opened ANNEX Bangkok in Thailand in March 2018, ANNEX Aachen in Germany in March 2019, and, with the cooperation of JSPS San Francisco, ANNEX Berkeley in the United States in October 2021.

The decision to establish the newest Tokyo Tech ANNEX in the San Francisco Bay Area was based on the proximity to many universities and to Silicon Valley. Tokyo Tech believes Berkeley is the ideal base from which to develop researcher and student exchanges with research and academic institutions,

promote research collaboration with local companies, and support Tokyo Tech start-ups in accessing the North American market.

A feature article has been released on the Institute's website in conjunction with the launch of Tokyo Tech ANNEX Berkeley. Titled "Insights into US-Japan Innovation," the article covers interviews with professors from UC Berkeley and the University of Illinois on university-led innovation and expectations for US-Japan collaboration through Tokyo Tech ANNEX Berkeley.

For the time being, ANNEX Berkeley looks forward to communicating with members of the academic and research community in Northern California and beyond through online events. ANNEX Berkeley supported an online colloquium on "Piercing the Structure of Tradition: Flute Performance, Continuity, and Freedom in the Music of Noh Drama" held on November 8 (PST).

The event was jointly organized by the Center for Japanese Studies at UC Berkeley and the Institute for Liberal Arts at Tokyo Tech.

Tokyo Tech ANNEX Berkeley will also be organizing in-person events in the Bay Area as soon as circumstances permit. We are

looking forward to meeting each of you in person!

“Insights into US-Japan Innovation” URL: <https://www.titech.ac.jp/english/public-relations/global/stories/us-japan-innovation>



HIROSHIMA UNIVERSITY

HU opens new international exchange facility this fall

Hiroshima University (HU) is glad to announce its new international exchange facility opened on October 27, 2021. Get to know more about "MIRAI CREA."

A research center in HU's host city, Higashihiroshima

Established in cooperation with Higashihiroshima City, the facility will have multiple functions. These include promoting innovation, facilitating interaction and the

exchange of knowledge between people from Japan and overseas, and providing a safe and comfortable place for top overseas researchers and talented international students to stay.

A hill of exchanges interwoven with greenery

The building's symbolic exterior design embodies a sustainable society, with an organic architectural shape and a layout plan that inherits the existing trees, hills, and pathways.

The seven-story steel-reinforced concrete building has a total floor area of 3,954m². The entrance lobby on the first and second floors are the centerpiece of the building. It includes an open and flexible multipurpose space, a community kitchen, a café, and conference rooms. From the third floor upwards, the dormitory space features a lounge for residents to socialize. The seventh floor is configured with rooms to attract leading researchers. The entire building is designed to be wheelchair accessible.

Why MIRAI CREA?

HU unveiled the winning name, which garnered the most votes out of the 168 entries submitted by the university's students,

faculty, and staff. HU's International Exchange Facility Administration Working Group held a meeting based on the votes and decided that the facility's common name would be "MIRAI CREA." Meanwhile, its official name would be "Hiroshima University Phoenix International Center" to represent its function.

"I came up with the name 'MIRAI CREA' from the phrase 'Create the Future (Mirai),' with the hope that it [the facility] will become a place where diverse people from Japan and overseas can gather to innovate and create a sustainable future," said Shimo Natsuki, the second-year HU School of Engineering student who submitted the winning entry.



On October 27, 2021, HU celebrated the opening of its new international exchange facility – the Phoenix International Center MIRAI CREA.

Office Member Greeting

TAKASHI FUKUSHIMA (October, 2021 - September, 2022)

Hello, my name is Takashi Fukushima. I started as JSPS SF's new adviser on October 1, 2021. I work for Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. For the past year and a half I have been assisting the prefectural board of education in their efforts to address COVID-19. Thanks to the medical community and universities, students are coming back to Berkeley, where I now live. Although it is difficult to foresee the future, we would like to leverage JSPS's activities and experiences to cooperate with academic communities and support Japanese universities and researchers. I hope to meet some of you in person while I'm here in the US.



KENGO OHTA (September, 2021 - August, 2023)

Hello, my name is Kengo Ohta. I am excited and honored to begin my new position at JSPS San Francisco as deputy director from September 1st 2021. This is the first overseas assignment for me and my first U.S. visit as well, so that is why everything I see here is so interesting and fascinating. It is my pleasure to work with such a great staff here and having opportunities to meet people from various backgrounds.

Originally I worked for Shizuoka University, mainly in the Financial Section, but in the last 3 years I had been in charge of the Asia Bridge Program (ABP) in the International Section. It is a unique support program for Asian students where they can cultivate a global vision and acquire hands-on experience in global companies. In spite of their challenging environment, their motivation and positivity was impressive. That was one of the things which motivated me to take on new challenges.

We are still in a difficult situation though, I hope I can visit universities and research institutions in the U.S.



MASAKAZU ITO (September, 2019 – August, 2021)

For about half of my term, I had to work remotely from Japan, and had to deal with a 16-hour time difference, but surrounded by wonderful colleagues, I was able to get through it with little difficulty. I feel that the experience of exploring alternatives and using our imagination to fill in the missing pieces while working on a project in an uncertain and unstable situation helped us grow as a team. I was also very happy to receive words of appreciation and encouragement from the participants at the events we held after much trial and error. Although I was not able to stay in the U.S. as I had originally planned, the experience of meeting wonderful colleagues and overcoming challenges together is something I would not trade for anything. I'm already looking forward to seeing the friends I made in Berkeley again and having a beer with them after the world gets back to normal and people are free to move around.



Students, faculty, and staff are slowly coming back to campus but many events continue to be held online. Most seem to expect that schools will return to normal gradually. This article will assess where schools are in this process. There's good news, bad news, and not-as-bad-as-expected news.

Enrollment

Back in April of 2020, the American Council on Education (ACE) predicted that colleges and universities would see a 15% drop in overall enrollment for the Fall 2020 term with a 25% drop for international students¹.

According to the Chronicle of Higher Education's analysis of government statistics, enrollment dropped only 2.4% for all students (undergrad and graduate) at all institutions (private and public). However when focusing on new first-time undergrads, enrollment dropped 7.9 percent for Fall 2020. The number gets worse when focusing on first-time undergrads at public community colleges where enrollment dropped 16.5%².

Similarly, the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center recently released data showing a 3.2 percent decline in undergraduate enrollment compared to last year. Enrollment was down last year as well. The decline from 2019 to 2021 was 6.5 percent³.

Closures and Consolidation

Predictions of widespread closures and consolidation predate the pandemic. Back in 2017, Clayton Christensen, Harvard Business School professor and author of the hugely

influential book, "The Innovator's Dilemma", predicted that half of America's colleges would go bankrupt in 10 to 15 years⁴. Predictions like this have only increased since the start of the pandemic.

According to the Chronicle, 15 colleges have shut down or have merged with another institution but this is largely in line with past years. So far we are not seeing a wave of closures or consolidations. And yet, many institutions say their financial stability is at risk.

A recent survey from the Association of American Colleges and Universities found that among institutions with 5,000 students or less, 79% of respondents said that 'financial constraints' were a significant challenge. This compares to 52% of respondents from schools with more than 30,000 students. A majority of all respondents indicated that 'they are very concerned about the overall financial stability of their institutions'⁵.

Undergraduate Enrolment During the Pandemic

	% change from 2019-2020	% change from 2020-2021	% change from 2019-2021
Public 4yr	-1	-2	-3
Private nonprofit 4yr	-1	-1	-1
Private for-profit 4yr	-0	-13	-13
Public 2yr	-9	-6	-14
Total	-3	-3	-7

Created with Datawrapper



Labor shortages, supply chain issues and declines in revenue

Colleges and Universities have also faced steep declines in revenue. As students left campus schools lost out on millions from on-campus accommodations. Other important revenue streams from on-campus businesses such as bookstores, recreation facilities, and campus gyms, dried up. The Chronicle’s analysis found that even early into the pandemic the revenue from these on-campus businesses, called ‘auxiliary enterprises’, declined by 25% or more. The University of Southern California auxiliary enterprise revenue declined 33% which worked out to a \$123 million decline. Similarly, Stanford University experienced a decline of 46.5% for a loss of \$164 million.

Readers in Japan might not appreciate how much schools try to appeal to prospective students by highlighting on-campus amenities such as state-of-the art recreation centers, fancy dormitories, sleek new dining halls, stadiums, pools and yes, even water parks. If you don’t know what I’m talking about, I recommend typing ‘campus lazy river’ into Google image search. The new

fancy dining hall on campus is very much part of a school's sales pitch, at least at some places⁶. Of course these amenities sat empty for much of 2020 and 2021, no doubt losing significant amounts of money in the process.

While campuses have started to reopen, colleges and universities are not isolated from larger supply-chain and labor market issues that have affected business and consumers throughout the US. The effects are especially pronounced in the food service industry and this includes on-campus restaurants and cafeterias.

Examples of this can be found on Instagram, TikTok, and other social media platforms where students are complaining of long wait times, undercooked food, and cancelled orders. Student newspapers at Stanford⁷, UCLA⁸, University of Texas⁹, Washington State¹⁰, Penn State¹¹, and other universities have all run stories describing how hard it can be to get lunch at the student cafeteria. There are some indications that wait times for food on campus have improved at many universities but it seems we still have a ways to go before things get back to normal.



(Image courtesy of [Constanza Montemayor](#) and [The Daily Bruin](#))

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