

## Waseda University Visiting International Scholars Conference

- The research environment and life at Waseda University  
November 14, 2008 (Friday)

### Opening Remarks: Kenji Horiguchi / Vice President, Waseda University

Thank you very much for attending today's Visiting International Scholars Conference, hosted by the International Office and the Office of International Research Promotion. I would like to say a few words on behalf of Waseda University.

At any given time there are about 350 international scholars in residence at Waseda University, researchers from overseas who are active internationally. As well, there are currently about 1200 students from overseas enrolled in Waseda's graduate schools. I would like to begin by expressing our gratitude to you who are here today for choosing Waseda University for your research, teaching or studies.

The purpose of this conference is to invite international scholars to talk freely and discuss the research and living environment at Waseda University, as seen from the researchers' point of view, and also to solicit your suggestions and requests to Waseda.

Last year Waseda University celebrated its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Taking a new direction, we are working to construct a global university WASEDA, extending to become much more than just a Japanese university. Our vision is to create a university that can provide the matrix for the exchange of various studies, cultures, languages and ethos. In this contemporary society, with globalization proceeding steadily, a great number of cross-border issues have arisen in a variety of fields, including politics, economics, and the environment. In order to address such issues, we believe that it is essential that universities, whose function is to create and offer wisdom, should work to proactively create global wisdom. Within such a framework, we are thinking to promote ever more exchanges among international researchers so as to greatly enhance internationalization of research.

However, in actual fact, it is not so easy for researchers to devote themselves to their research in locations far away from home. They face various difficulties, such as differences

in research environment and language, funding, family issues, housing and culture. They need to overcome a wide variety of obstacles in both their research and living environments. We imagine that your choice of Waseda University was based on various notions and decisions. For this reason, we planned this conference today, thinking it best to ask your opinions directly. We would like to work to create an ever better environment where you can achieve great research outcomes and truly enjoy life at Waseda.

Today our guest speaker is Mr. Yoshinori Ishikawa, the director of Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza in Shinjuku Ward. Shinjuku Ward is a municipality which has a close connection with Waseda University. Mr. Ishikawa will talk about Shinjuku's work towards the harmonious coexistence of multiple cultures. Shinjuku Ward is a forward-thinking municipality in Japan, having shown leadership in the work towards multicultural coexistence. We are convinced that his presentation will promote understanding within our community.

We would like you to speak up openly today. Please do not hesitate to relate the various troubles you have encountered in your research activities and daily life here, balanced by any good points you wish to point out about Waseda University. We will take your comments seriously and will endeavor to improve the areas of difficulty as much as possible. In addition, we would like to ask you to give us advice about means of further supporting your research life. Let's think together, then, about ways to make Waseda an even better university.

Thank you.