

## ■ Feature

### Two symposia commemorating the 70th anniversary of Okayama University to further contribute to the SDGs

Okayama University was established in 1949 and is celebrating its 70th anniversary in 2019. Authorized by the United Nations as the first institute in Asia to establish a UNESCO Chair in 2007, the university has launched initiatives to promote Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). In 1994 the university it became the first national university in Japan to establish an environment-focused faculty: The Faculty of Environmental Science and Technology. This is an example of Okayama University’s continued efforts on promoting the SDGs with the involvement of members of local community. On 9th July the university organized two SDG-themed symposia in commemoration of its 70th anniversary.

The theme of the first symposium was “Water and Life in Okayama”. This theme was chosen because one year has passed since torrential rain in July 2018 caused tremendous damage in western Japan.



Addressing an audience of local residents young researchers from Okayama University described their latest results on lifestyles and culture related to water—the source of life. Associate Professor Keisuke Yoshida from the Graduate School of Environmental and Life Science made a presentation about technology to make detailed measurements of wide-area landform from aircraft, for accurately predicting the flow of water during heavy rainfall. Other talks were on the development of Nishikawa Ryokudo Park in the center of Okayama, and on research focused on the DNA of marine creatures in the Seto Inland Sea, with the goal of conserving the sea environment.

The next symposium was, “Towards Greater Okayama as the Center for the U.S. and Japan Youth Development to Advance the SDGs”, commemorating Okayama University’s selection this year as the first national university in Japan to accept students under the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program\* sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. A panel discussion took place with the participation of President Hirofumi Makino of Okayama University,



Dr. David Patton, President and CEO of American Councils, and students participating in the CLS Program. The panelists exchanged opinions about the advantages of human resource development being conducted in Okayama, a place known for close ties amongst local communities, and how they can promote this initiative more effectively.

As a leader for SDG promotion in Japanese academia, Okayama University will continue its efforts to contribute to the SDGs in collaboration with local communities and partners worldwide to create new social values and advance global partnerships for the SDGs and ESD. Let's change the world with the SDGs and ESD with our partners worldwide!

\* A program for university/graduate school students from top-class American universities to learn Japanese language and culture in Japan.

#### Further information

Okayama University (Japanese page)  
[http://www.okayama-u.ac.jp/tp/news/news\\_id8628.html](http://www.okayama-u.ac.jp/tp/news/news_id8628.html)



Okayama University (Japanese page)  
[http://www.okayama-u.ac.jp/tp/news/news\\_id8635.html](http://www.okayama-u.ac.jp/tp/news/news_id8635.html)



UNESCO Chair at OKAYAMA UNIVERSITY  
[https://edu.okayama-u.ac.jp/unesco\\_chair/public\\_html/en/index.html](https://edu.okayama-u.ac.jp/unesco_chair/public_html/en/index.html)



Welcome reception held by Okayama University and  
the U.S. Department of State for CLS American students  
[https://www.okayama-u.ac.jp/eng/news/index\\_id8639.html](https://www.okayama-u.ac.jp/eng/news/index_id8639.html)



United Nations  
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2019>

