

Report from the OIST Gender Equality Task Force

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Background

The OIST Graduate University was established in November 2011 with the inauguration of the school corporation. Consistent with University's core concepts OIST is conducting outstanding research and teaching in science and technology, over half of the faculty and students are recruited from outside of Japan, and English is the daily operational language of the University. In all of these ways OIST is providing a model for graduate universities in Japan and internationally.

However, in terms of gender balance and policies to establish and maintain gender equality within the university OIST must improve its performance. Women constitute a relatively high percentage of the OIST workforce, 44% in April 2014. However, a review of the positions held by women at OIST indicates the ratio of female faculty (15%), researchers (22%) and students (30%) are far below world standards and there is a critical shortage of women in manager and executive positions (9%).

In recognition of this situation President Dorfan introduced a number of initiatives to help address gender balance: establishment of a Gender Equality Committee; requirement that all faculty search committees have a member responsible for monitoring and reporting on efforts to recruit and hire female faculty; statement on all job advertisements indicating OIST welcomes applications from women; target of opportunity positions to recruit talented female faculty when opportunities were identified; and multiple appointments if faculty searches permitted. Although helpful it soon became apparent these initiatives were not sufficient to address the problem of gender inequality at OIST. In response, at its October 2013 meeting, the OIST BOG endorsed the President's establishment of a Gender Equality Task Force to discuss changes and recommendations to improve gender equality at OIST. The task force was formed and divided into four working groups (recruitment and retention of faculty, postdocs, students and research staff; quality of life; promotion and assessment practices for administrative staff; and enhanced communication surrounding gender equality) to develop recommendations, reporting back to the task force as a whole.

The recommendations of the Task Force are presented below. The BOG's support for their implementation is sought. It is emphasized that these recommendations represent a starting point for improving OIST's performance in the important area of gender equality. Ms. Kubo and Professor Tripp thank the Task Force members for their commitment to the activities of the Task Force and Gender Equality more generally, and Professor Dorfan for his support of this initiative.

2.0 OIST's Gender Equality Goals

- 2.1 **Create a working environment that is attractive to, and supportive of, all staff irrespective of gender, age or family status.**
- 2.2 **Achieve gender balance within every job category and level within OIST, defined as at least 30% women, by 2020 (BOG/BOC, Executives, Managers, Faculty, Researchers, Students).** For some categories the goal of 30% women may be exceeded before 2020.

3.0 Task Force Recommendations

Proposed Implementation Time Frame Key

*	Implement immediately
*+	Initiate immediately
**	Implement within 6 months
***	Implement within 12 months

3.1 Personnel and Structural Recommendations

3.1.1 Appoint a Vice-President responsible for gender equality and create an Office of Gender Equality and Career Development (OGECD) *+

Roles

The Vice President and OEGCD will be responsible for the implementation, monitoring and review of all gender equality initiatives at OIST.

Together with the President, BOG and OIST staff, the VP for Gender Equality and the OEGCD will be responsible for updating and developing new initiatives to achieve and maintain gender equality at OIST.

Recommendations from the Task Force, supported by the President and the BOG, will be managed through the OEGCD

The VP for Gender Equality will be responsible to the BOG and the President of OIST

Justification

Creation of a VP for gender equality is required to provide independence and authority to develop and implement necessary changes and review progress toward gender equality within OIST.

Progress toward and maintenance of gender equality at OIST should not be dependent on the support of future OIST Presidents and/or VPs for Compliance.

Implementation, monitoring and review of the Task Force recommendations and future initiatives will require substantial, sustained effort. This will require an office working with the VP for Gender Equality. These activities cannot be successfully delegated to committees formed from existing University staff with other full time responsibilities.

Staffing

Vice President for Gender Equality:

Candidates for this position should have a strong background in the development and implementation of gender equality policies in a University setting. An international search should be initiated.

Two specialist-level positions:

Candidates for these positions should have a strong commitment to and training in the implementation of gender equality policies within a University setting. Searchers within and outside of Japan should be initiated following the appointment of the VP for Gender Equality

3.2 Action Recommendations

3.2.1 All OIST Recommendations

3.2.1.1 **Develop an OIST Gender Policy Code of Conduct ****

3.2.1.2 **Incorporate the OIST Gender Policy Code of Conduct and all gender equality polices, rules and procedures into the PRP document ****

3.2.1.3 **Increase attractiveness of the OIST working environment**

3.2.1.3.1 Improve working hours/work flexibility

3.2.1.3.1.1 All administrative meetings should end at 5.00pm *

3.2.1.3.1.2 All meetings should be concluded in a timely manner *

3.2.1.3.1.3 Develop a “work at home” policy **

3.2.1.3.1.4 Expand the current flextime working system to allow variations in working style **

3.2.1.3.2 Enhance the gender equality climate at OIST

3.2.1.3.2.1 Implement, on a regular basis, high quality proactive sensitivity training for harassment and discrimination *+

3.2.1.3.2.2 Provide “unconscious bias and gender equality” training for all managers and above who evaluate employees *+

3.2.1.3.2.3 Encourage establishment of a support network amongst female staff to facilitate informal discussion of gender equality issues and concerns. Resources (e.g., space, computing) to be provided by OIST administration**

- 3.2.1.3.3 Improve the physical environment for pregnant women and parents
- 3.2.1.3.3.1 Establish comfortable resting rooms for pregnant OIST staff and students in each OIST building **
- 3.2.1.3.3.2 Establish comfortable parent/feeding rooms for OIST staff and students in each OIST building **
- 3.2.1.4 **Enhance the current maternity/child care leave policies**
- 3.2.1.4.1 Undertake a thorough review of maternity and childcare leave and benefits with reference to international best practice *+
- 3.2.1.4.2 Improve parental leave (maternity and/or paternity) beyond Japanese law **
- 3.2.1.4.2.1 Provide a period of paternity leave **
(specific details to be determined)
- 3.2.1.4.2.2 Revise maternity leave provisions in case of premature delivery *+

Japanese/OIST maternity provisions provide for 6 weeks paid leave before the birth of a child and 8 weeks after delivery, a total of 14 weeks paid leave. In the case of premature delivery, leave is cut short by the number of weeks preterm. Preterm delivery is stressful itself and the preterm infant often requires special care.
- 3.2.1.4.2.3 Introduce maternity leave/benefits for part time employees **
- 3.2.1.4.3 Provide additional funding to research units/administrative groups to cover costs of temporary staff to cover maternity/paternity/child care leave **

All pregnant OIST employees should feel able to take maternity leave entitlements before and after the birth of a child without feeling pressure to cut leave short to meet Research Unit or Administrative Section needs. Funding to cover short-term replacements will help reduce pressure from Faculty and managers.
- 3.2.1.5 **Develop a “stop the clock” policy for promotions in general, faculty research reviews, faculty tenure reviews, STG reviews, and for fixed term contract employees. This should be applied to mothers and also to fathers where they can demonstrate significant childcare responsibilities ****

- 3.2.1.6 **Introduce best practices to achieve gender balance across all sectors of OIST** (see also specific recommendations under Administration and Academic/Research sections)
- 3.2.1.6.1 Provide “unconscious bias and gender equality” training for all candidate selection panels for all positions at OIST *+
- 3.2.1.6.2 To the degree to which it is practical have female presence on all candidate selection committees within OIST *+ ¹
- 3.2.1.6.3 Search, target and actively recruit women to apply for executive, manager and faculty positions through all means possible *+
- 3.2.1.6.4 Ensure all openings at OIST include statements indicating that OIST welcomes applications from women *
- 3.2.1.7 **Aggressively promote capable qualified women within OIST**
- 3.2.1.7.1 Actively encourage women to apply for promotion within OIST *
- 3.2.1.7.2 Utilize the professional experts ladder to promote talented women when organizational management positions are not available *+
- 3.2.1.7.3 Provide high quality promotion preparation and training workshops for women at OIST (during working hours) *+
- 3.2.1.8 **Undertake an OIST wide salary review *+**
- 3.2.1.8.1 Initiate necessary steps to revise salaries where gaps are identified **
- 3.2.1.9 **Widely advertise OIST Gender Equality policies and initiatives within and beyond the University ***
- 3.2.1.9.1 Publish OIST Gender Policy Code of Conduct on the internal and external OIST Websites **
- 3.2.1.9.2 Include a brief statement of OIST’s Gender Policy Code of Conduct on all position announcements (internships, Graduate School applications, faculty, research, and administrative positions) together with a link to the full policy and list of gender equality initiatives **
- 3.2.1.9.3 Design and produce a trifold brochure outlining key OIST gender equality initiatives for inclusion with all OIST promotion packages **
- 3.2.1.9.4 Include a brief summary of OIST gender equality initiatives for inclusion in all OIST brochures *+
- 3.2.1.9.5 Create an OIST Gender Equality web page including the

recommendations of the Gender Equality Task Force. Web page to be updated as recommendations are implemented and new initiatives are added to maintain momentum and ensure the issue of gender equality remains visible *+

- 3.2.1.9.6 Prepare high quality report of BOG supported Task Force recommendations - to be updated as new recommendations/initiatives developed **

3.2.2 Administrative/Executive Staff

3.2.2.1 **Establish a high quality career development and support program for women working within the administrative sector at OIST**

- 3.2.2.1.1 Provide onsite skill/training programs *+

- 3.2.2.1.2 Ensure all positions and training opportunities are made known to women working at OIST *

- 3.2.2.1.3[§] Establish a mentoring program for female administrative staff **

- 3.2.2.1.4[§] Establish position inter-exchanges within and outside OIST to develop skills and expertise required for promotion **

3.2.2.2 **Target and aggressively recruit suitably qualified women for higher level positions (executive and manager level) ****

3.2.2.3 **Reduce gender imbalance in female dominated sectors (e.g. research administrator and executive assistant positions) through relocation and personnel exchanges (details to be determined) *****

It is recommended that a Committee of Personnel Career Development be established within the OGECD, under the guidance of the BOG, to monitor gender balance and exclusivity at the executive and managerial levels. This committee will also review training programs and opportunities for staff seeking career development towards managerial/professional career ladders. It is anticipated that the committee will also review and advise on training inter-exchanges of personnel between divisions and/or sections at OIST.

§4.2.2.1.4 and 4.2.2.3 must respect the legal rights and preferences of executives, managers and staff

3.2.3. Research staff (Faculty, Researchers, Research Technicians, Students)

3.2.3.1 **Provide “Confidence building and leadership” training for all female researchers at OIST (all levels) ***

3.2.3.2 **Establish mentoring programs for all female researchers at all levels within OIST *****

3.2.3.3 **Run a 1-2 day workshop for female faculty/research staff/students on a fixed day annually to provide females with a clear opportunity to discuss issues directly affecting them ****

3.2.3.4 **Create internal research-related or community related prizes specifically for females at OIST *****

Japanese funding agencies carefully review prizes and award received during the grant review process.

3.2.3.5 **Include females as external reviewers for all faculty applicants ***

3.2.3.6 **OIST funded/organized workshops/conferences/speakers must aim for equal gender participation** (detailed plan and procedures to be determined) *+

3.2.3.6.1 To attract female speakers to workshops support economy fares to bring partner and children **

3.2.3.6.3 The percentage of OIST talks in community should reflect the percentage of women researchers (Faculty, STG, Researchers, Students)¹

3.2.3.7 **Raise awareness of achievements of OIST female researchers in OIST news releases ***

3.2.3.8 **Establish an appropriate means of compensating female faculty/researchers/students for participating in activities to promote gender equality at OIST that create additional demands on their time *+**

The number of female faculty and postdoctoral scholars and lab leaders at OIST is small. Extra demands placed on the time of this small pool serves as a form of gender bias and discrimination. This will not cease to be a problem once OIST achieves its targeted 30% women in all sectors and at all levels within OIST.

¹ Activities requiring additional input based on gender.

3.2.3a Faculty

3.2.3a.1 **Actively recruit talented female applicants to OIST faculty positions** (full set of initiatives to be developed)

3.2.3a.1.1 Identify pool of potential female talent for “Target of opportunity” positions **

3.2.3a.1.1.1 Invite talented junior and senior female researchers to visit OIST to give talks and interact with the OIST community ** (other initiatives to be developed)

3.2.3a.1.2 For all faculty positions talented female applicants should be identified through OIST contacts and connections and encouraged to apply for positions at OIST *

3.2.3a.1.3 Where there are two equally ranked job candidates and one, or both, are female create a second position *

3.2.3a.1.4 Where the 2nd ranked candidate for a position is a highly rated female candidate, create a second position *

3.2.3a.1.5 Develop clear guidelines/policies for dealing with dual career families. Include these guidelines on position announcements and on the OIST website *+

3.2.3b Researchers

3.2.3b.1 **Actively recruit and support talented early career female scientists**

3.2.3b.1.1 Identify a pool of talented females completing PhDs or a first postdoc and proactively maintain contact (specific details of identification of talent pool to be determined)*-**

3.2.3b.1.2 Develop a working relationship with Japanese Universities supporting/targeting talented junior researchers. As appropriate participate in joint activities/events ***

3.2.3b.1.3 Provide a centrally funded OIST prestigious postdoctoral fellowship for female researchers ***

3.2.3b.1.4 Where a talented female candidate has an appropriately qualified partner who also works in science consider centrally funding another research position. Advertise this possibility (details to be worked out) ***

3.2.3c Students

3.2.3c.1 **Target talented students in the pipeline**

3.2.3c.1.1 Strongly encourage OIST female faculty¹ and researchers¹ to participate in student recruitment activities through OIST cafés, student workshops and giving OIST talks when travelling inside and outside Japan *

- 3.2.3c.1.2 Encourage current OIST female students¹ to give OIST talks at their undergraduate universities and participate in OIST cafés and other recruitment activities **
- 3.2.3c.1.3 Offer talented interns a return internship at OIST the following year – guaranteed based on performance **
- 3.2.3c.1.4 Actively encourage talented female interns to apply to the OIST graduate program *
- 3.2.3c.2 **Talented female students should be identified and strongly encouraged to apply for OIST internships, workshops and the Graduate Program**
- 3.2.3c.3 **All faculty participating in student selections should undergo unconscious bias sensitivity training on a regular basis**
- 3.2.3c.4 **When the proportion of female candidates applying to, or selected for, internships workshops and the Graduate program is below that of male students additional checks should be made to ensure qualified female students have not been passed over**
- 3.2.3c.3 **Consider establishing a mentoring program for talented female high school and undergraduate science students in Okinawa and Japan**

Provision of onsite short courses to build confidence in science as a career involving mentors at all levels within OIST (faculty, researchers, technicians and students)¹ might be considered as the number of female faculty and researchers increases.

3.2.3c.1.1 and 3.2.3c.1.2 above should be supported by OIST

4.0 Conclusions

OIST has an opportunity to actively address gender equality within the university and in doing so exceed Japanese government targets of a ratio of 30% females in leadership positions by 2020 and establish itself as a model for other universities within Japan.

We request the support of the BOG for the Gender Equality Task Force recommendations and future OIST initiatives to create a working environment that is attractive and nurturing to all staff.

The Task force recommendations, and their implementation, should be seen as a starting point towards gender equality at OIST. Gender equality will require substantive change, sustained effort and the regular updating of initiatives.

Appendices

Table 1:

Percentage of females employed in different positions at OIST
(As of September 1, 2013)

Category	Title	Female	Male	Total	% of Female
Executive	President, Provost, Auditor, VP	1	9	10	10%
Faculty	Professor	1	18	19	5%
	Assistant Professor	2	12	14	14%
	Associate Professor	3	9	12	25%
	Total	6	39	45	13%
Researchers	Group Leader	3	18	21	14%
	Researcher	29	121	150	19%
	Research Scientist	6	3	9	67%
	Total	38	142	180	21%
Technician	Technician	39	31	70	56%
	Research Assistant	8	0	8	100%
	Total	47	31	78	60%
Students	PhD Student	16	38	54	30%
	Special Research Student	6	13	19	32%
	Research Intern	17	21	38	45%
	Total	39	72	111	35%
Administrative	Manager, Senior Manager, Others	1	27	28	4%
	Administrative Staff	115	58	173	66%
	Research Administrator	35	0	35	100%
	Total	151	85	236	64%
OIST Total		282	378	660	43%

Table 2:

Percentage of females employed in different positions at OIST
(As of April 1, 2014)

Category	Title	Female	Male	Total	% of Female
Executive	President, Provost, Auditor, EVP, VP	1	10	11	9%
Faculty	Professor	2	19	21	10%
	Assistant Professor	2	12	14	14%
	Associate Professor	3	9	12	25%
	Total	7	40	47	15%
Researchers	Group Leader	3	19	22	14%
	Researcher	32	127	159	20%
	Research Scientist	6	3	9	67%
	Total	41	149	190	22%
Technician	Technician	42	36	78	54%
	Research Assistant	5	0	5	100%
	Total	47	36	83	57%
Students	PhD Student	15	38	53	28%
	Special Research Student	4	11	15	27%
	Research Intern	5	7	12	42%
	Total	24	56	80	30%
Administrative	Manager, Senior Manager, Others	3	32	35	9%
	Administrative Staff	137	58	195	70%
	Research Administrator	37	0	37	100%
	Total	177	90	267	66%
OIST Total		297	381	678	44%

Table 3:

Task Force Membership

Name	Title	
Gail Tripp	Professor	Co-Chair
Maki Kubo	Vice President, Administrative Compliance	Co-Chair
Sile Nic Chormaic	Associate Professor	Chair, Working Group 1
Jeff Wickens	Dean of Graduate School	Chair, Working Group 2
George Iwama	Executive Vice President	Chair, Working Group 2
Hiroataka Sugawara	Special Advisor to the President	Chair, Working Group 3
Neil Calder	Vice President, Communications & Public Relations	Chair, Working Group 4
Cherry Murray	BOG	Member, Working Group 1
Kiyoshi Kurokawa	BOG	Member, Working Group 3
Rita Colwell	BOG	Member, Working Group 3
Torsten Wiesel	BOG	Member, Working Group 1
Hajimu Nomura	Associate Vice President, Human Resources	Member, Working Group 3
Bruce Charles McLin	Manager, Talent Development and Support Section	Member, Working Group 2, 3
Anna Nagamine	Specialist, Business Development Section	Member, Working Group 3
Rosa Estela Diaz Rivas	Researcher, Sowwan Unit	Member, Working Group 1, 2
Sakurako Watanabe	Student	Member, Working Group 1, 2, 4
Sandrine Anne Laure Burriel-Ha	Student	Member, Working Group 1, 2, 4
Akiko Mizukoshi	Assistant Manager, Diversity Section	Secretariat