



OIST

OKINAWA INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GRADUATE UNIVERSITY  
沖縄科学技術大学院大学

May 21, 2021

To: Board of Governors and Board of Councilors,  
Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology School Corporation

From:

Kentaro Miura

Kentaro Miura, Auditor

Yoshiyuki Uehara

Yoshiyuki Uehara, Auditor

George Clark

George Clark, Auditor

#### FY 2020 Audit Report

This document is to report the results of our periodical independent audit, regarding the business and financial operation during the fiscal year of 2020, at the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology School Corporation. The audit was conducted in accordance with Section 3, Article 15 of the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology School Corporation Bylaw.

#### 1. Methods of Audit

- (1) For the operational audit, we attended the Board of Governors and Board of Councilors meetings, and conducted interviews with the President and other executive members regarding the School Corporation's business execution. We also reviewed important kessai (decision-making) documents and examined the adequacy of the business, in cooperation with the Internal Audit Section.
- (2) For the audit of financial status, we confirmed the accuracy of the statements with the accounting firm, Ernst & Young Shin Nihon LLC.

#### 2. Conclusion

- (1) We did not find any significant violation of laws and regulations, or bylaws, nor any act of misconduct or fraud pertaining to the School Corporation's business administration and its assets.
- (2) We verify that the business report accurately reflects the condition of the School Corporation's business operation.
- (3) We also verify that the financial statements match the contents of the accounting records, and that the School Corporation's status of assets, gain and loss, are properly shown in compliance with laws and the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Accounting Standard. The Financial Closing Report was prepared according to the budget classification and properly reflected the status of closing.

Please find attached FY 2020 Audit Results and Auditors' Opinion.

## FY 2020 Audit Results and Auditors' Opinion

### 1. Introduction

The year 2021 marks a major milestone for the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University (hereinafter, "OIST"), as it is the 10<sup>th</sup> year since the university's establishment, and the Okinawa Promotion Plan—which includes the university's vision and is one of its pillars—will be reviewed.

In addition, the global pandemic caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to pose a major threat as well as increased cybersecurity risks.

In light of the situation, the auditors reviewed the audit risk matrix, incorporated two new focus areas, and modified the existing risk categories as follows:

- ☐ Added cyber security risks,
- ☐ Added the COVID-19 pandemic in consideration of its global impact on safety, and
- ☐ Expanded the research expense management risk and renamed it as financial management.

We extend our deepest gratitude for the sincere responses of each division that was audited and the university management's and other related parties' cooperation during the audit.

### 2. Audit plan

#### (1) Basic audit policy

In accordance with Article 15, Section 3 of the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology School Corporation Bylaws and Chapter 9, "Auditors' Audit," of the OIST's "Library of Policies, Rules, and Procedures" (hereinafter, "PRP"), the audits are conducted to promote OIST's legitimate and efficient business and administrative operations and to form the auditors' opinion on the closing of FY2020 as provisioned in Article 34, Section 1 of the Bylaws, including the progress and findings from the audit conducted by an accounting firm.

#### (2) Audit items

For the FY2020 audit, the auditors conducted audits of the items listed in PRP-9.4.1, especially items ① through ⑤ and ⑥ of the business plan, and item 3 of the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University Auditors' Guidelines for Auditors' Audit (decided by the auditors in September 2017) as follows:

- ① Education and research;
- ② Transparency and efficiency of governance and business operations;
- ③ Finance;
- ④ Contribution to the independent development of Okinawa;



⑤ Campus development, formation of the university community, ensuring safety and the environment; and

⑥ Other matters that require audit for the university to achieve sound and stable operations.

Specifically, the following matters, which require continuous efforts (hereinafter, "common matters"), shall be audited:

- ☐ Improvement of operational efficiency,
- ☐ Response to labor shortages,
- ☐ Management of task progress,
- ☐ Management of budget execution,
- ☐ Coordination between divisions,
- ☐ Improvement of working environment,
- ☐ Anti-harassment measures,
- ☐ Training programs,
- ☐ Improvement of staff's management skills,
- ☐ Ensuring information security,
- ☐ Initiatives for disaster prevention and safety and health management, and
- ☐ The Business Continuity Plan (BCP).

Moreover, the auditors audited the university's COVID-19 response because this requires continuous effort, and the measures devised and taken by the divisions are useful to the university as a whole.

In addition, the individual divisions were audited for items such as "contribution to the promotion of Okinawa" (hereinafter, "individual items") as stated in the purpose of the establishment of the university (Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology School Corporation Act [No. 76, 2009]).

In discussing the individual items, the order and the names of the divisions are basically in accordance with PRP 2.4.

### 3. Common items

#### (1) Business efficiency

To cope with the increase in workload due to the expansion of the university's scale and other factors, the university needs to improve operational efficiency.

To this end, each division was asked to confirm the efforts they implemented in FY2020 to improve operational efficiency and their ideas and plans for the future.

All the divisions have been taking proactive measures such as using information technology and the responsibility of managers (including the division heads) to monitor and guide them in

meetings.

In addition, many of the divisions plan to automate their processes in the future with the use of information technology.

**【Office of the Provost and Research Support Division (RSD)】**

- o The division adopted a system in which three of its administrative staff members concurrently work in different sections. This enabled them to prevent work delays in the sections that lacked full-time administrative staff due to staffing limitations or staff taking maternity leave. This also enabled the staff to broaden their work experience and develop their skills. In addition, the three staff members participated in weekly meetings to discuss the progress of their work and consult with each other, which enabled them to prepare for the busy season and solve problems.
- o In the future, the division plans to assign one technical staff member to two laboratory buildings to oversee the basic management of the common research facilities in Laboratories 1–4. This will allow them to set up a dedicated support system for each laboratory building in cooperation with the Faculty Affairs Office, which oversees the personnel affairs of the research units, and the Facilities Operation and Use Section, which is responsible for the maintenance and renovation of the laboratories, to respond to on-site problems more quickly and efficiently.

**【Office of the Chief Operating Officer(COO)】**

- o The office is trying to devise ways to improve efficiency, such as using SharePoint, an IT tool.

**【Graduate School (GS)】**

- o To eliminate overlapping responsibilities and improve efficiency of work processes, GS was reorganized twice in the past two years (FY2019 and FY2020), with focus on reducing personnel costs in FY2019 and on establishing new sections in FY2020. Both reorganizations have led to more effective operations.
- o In cooperation with the other divisions, GS promoted the reallocation of staff members and the transfer of tasks/projects between divisions.
- o GS is working on a project to migrate all the student-related tasks to a new student information system, Navii, which is being developed in collaboration with an external vendor, OpenCampus. This will automate many routine tasks and business communications to improve operational efficiency.

**【Faculty Affairs Office (FAO)】**

- o By compiling useful information and weblinks of the relevant procedures on the website, both the number of inquiries and response time were reduced in FY2020.
- o The cloud system "Interfolio," which was introduced by the team in charge of faculty recruitment in FAO, will soon undergo faculty and STG evaluation. It is scheduled to be operational from FY2021 and is expected to improve the efficiency of administrative work significantly by reducing the time required for information sharing and emailing.

- o FAO is preparing to introduce ServiceNow, which was recommended by the IT Division, to handle inquiries. By compiling FAQs and drawing on knowledge for general inquiries, and having team members cooperate in handling inquiries, it is expected that failure to respond will be prevented. This will also enable managers to focus on more complex and high-priority tasks.
- o When specific personnel information is needed from FAO, a request must be made to a designated team, and it takes time to provide the information. FAO will continue to examine how they can share information efficiently while ensuring the security of personally identifiable information.

#### **【Office of the Dean of Research (DoR)】**

- o The Grants and Research Collaborations Section has transferred the work regarding acceptance of researchers through scholarships to the appropriate office, the FAO, which oversees research personnel. FAO has been overseeing researchers upon their arrival at the university, and communication with the researchers has become smoother as they now have centralized contact information for inquiries at the time of acceptance.

The staff members in charge of networking are responsible for various administrative tasks and preparation work for symposiums, such as arranging accommodation for participants, printing posters, and arranging airline tickets, which must be carried out efficiently. In FY2020, logistics support was outsourced so that the staff could concentrate on the content of the symposiums.

#### **【Office of Technology Development and Innovation (TDIC)】**

- o In FY2020, TDIC used Microsoft's Teams as a communication tool and introduced SurveyMonkey to streamline the entire process from application to review of the Startup Accelerator Program.

#### **【Financial Management (FM)】**

- o The standard amount of orders that can be placed under the authority of divisions has been raised from 500,000 yen to 1.5 million yen. As a result, approximately 940 procurement orders per year are expected to be shifted to divisional orders. The time required for these orders is expected to decrease by approximately two hours per project.
- o In April 2021, the Contract Review Committee was abolished to reduce the workload, as the review and supervision system was sufficiently in place.

Currently, paper-based operations are being digitized with the use of ServiceNow.

#### **【Communication and Public Relations (CPR)】**

- o CPR continues to outsource web management operations, such as external website monitoring and web design operations, to focus more on specialized operations.
- o By setting up a well-equipped studio in the Center Building, the quality of PR resources that use multimedia has been improved, leading to quicker production by the existing staff.
- o CPR will continue to improve operational efficiency through the efforts mentioned above and by

outsourcing temporary staff; however, additional staff in OIST is needed to handle the workload, which is expected to increase with the university's future expansion.

**【Human Resource (HR)】**

- o In February 2020, HR introduced "e-staffing," which integrates temporary staff recruitment, contracts, time management, and invoice management. Prior to its implementation, timesheets of about 100 temporary staff from seven to eight temp agencies were submitted and approved on paper basis, which have now been computerized; accordingly, the compilation and invoicing process are expected to be much faster.
- o The Recruiting and the Training and Education Sections use Microsoft Teams to share files, manage project progress, and share and update strategies. This has saved time spent on searching for documents attached to old e-mails and enabled one-stop information and data sharing and communication. In communicating with FAO regarding position management, sharing the task lists and position creation templates via Teams app has significantly reduced the risks of missing or failing to respond.

**【Information Technology (IT)】**

- o The IT Division has automated system management tasks that were previously done manually, which, they estimated, has reduced the work time by about 20%. This has allowed the division to maintain operations without increasing the number of staff managing the system, in spite of increasing numbers of university staff and computers.
- o To date, improvements that focus on the automation of routine system management tasks have been made. In the future, user support will also be systemized with the use of more advanced artificial intelligence, and the IT Division staff members are expected to be able to focus on tasks that require more advanced judgment, planning, and design.

**【University Community Services (UCS) 】**

- o With the expansion of the university, the UCS sections have been responsible for: increasing the number of university clubs; taking over tasks from other divisions (bidding and managing vending machines); reserving and managing the university facilities for external events; implementing new initiatives (financial aid programs) and additional COVID-19-related measures; carrying out safety measures and cleaning procedures in CDC, SAP, Recreational Services, and Food Services; and implementing online language classes, recreational services, food services, education coordination, and social distancing measures in CDC. Various measures have been taken without increasing labor costs; for instance, the Language Education section "is using its recent survey data to better match its offerings (classes, class times, etc.) to maximize its teaching reach," and the Resource Center "has encouraged the use of email enquiries (for efficiency and social distancing) and is investigating a 'Service now' portal to further increase efficiency."

#### Auditors' opinion

- It is highly commendable that each division is trying to improve operational efficiency by using IT according to the nature and characteristics of the work and holding meetings in which managers, including division heads, take responsibility.

In addition, several divisions have improved efficiency by reviewing the necessity of existing tasks.

While the divisions should continue actively implementing the former approach, operational efficiency through the latter approach is also essential for fundamental improvements; therefore, it should be incorporated more rigorously.

#### (2) Responding to labor shortage

Some divisions referred to the shortage of manpower.

In an understaffed workplace, employees may feel exhausted, which may have an undesirable impact on their physical and mental health, the division they support, and the university as a whole.

Auditors asked each division about the current countermeasures put in place to address the labor shortage, as well as new ideas and plans they are considering for the future.

Most divisions “continue the efforts to fill the vacancies” and/or “utilize dual positions,” as well as hire temporary staff. However, some divisions have experienced challenges such as high turnover of temporary staff and ineffective cost management.

#### 【Office of the Provost and Research Support Division (RSD)】

- o The division assigns dual positions wherever possible.
- o Although assigning dual positions can solve labor shortage in the short term, this could be exhausting for the staff with dual position. In addition, if a staff member retires or takes maternity leave, finding a replacement that can take over all of the tasks is difficult. Therefore, in the long run, this practice could undermine the division's operational stability. Thus, in addition to continuing to secure positions every fiscal year, the division will try to find time in their daily operations to routinize and systematize the tasks.

#### 【Office of the Chief Operating Officer(COO)】

- o It is necessary to realize a multi-skilled work style for each staff member while streamlining the operations. The COO office would like to start with a close examination of each staff member's tasks and create a sharing and backup system.

#### 【Graduate School (GS)】

- o Two years ago, GS recognized that they could not expect to increase their workforce at the same rate as the increase in the number of students and faculty they serve; therefore, they embarked on a project to improve operational efficiency. In addition, GS began outsourcing some of the

operations, such as event coordination, digital communication, and travel coordination.

GS regularly analyzes workforce and task alignment to predict which PEREX positions should be prioritized for future needs. However, until the PEREX positions become available, GS is forced to rely heavily on temporary staff to fill the gaps. Temporary staffs have a contract limit of three years. The frequent turnover of temporary staff translates to significant time lost in searching for qualified temp staff and training them on tasks that require PEREX staff time. It is much more economical in the long run if these tasks can be continually performed by PEREX staff members.

**【Faculty Affairs Office (FAO)】**

- o Although there is not much labor shortage for regular work, new projects (e.g., research data archiving, research ethics education, research tag projects, enhancement of career development, etc.) require more personnel resources.

The other new programs for faculty and researchers include the Theoretical Visitors' Program (a large-scale program that invites theoretical researchers to OIST), the Interdisciplinary Postdoctoral Program (a medium-scale program that invites postdoctoral fellows who conduct interdisciplinary research), and the Sabbatical Visitor Program (a program that invites distinguished researchers from other universities as sabbatical faculty members). In addition, preparations are underway for the establishment of a new research institute, the Quantum Cryptography Program. The new Vice Dean of Faculty Affairs will oversee these new projects in addition to the current duties of the Dean of Faculty Affairs.

**【Office of the Dean of Research (DoR)】**

- o Aside from explaining to the Vice President of HR and others the section staffing plan (with respect to the university's overall policy), the Grants and Research Collaborations Section is also focusing on improving operational efficiency within the section by clarifying key tasks such as "who is the owner of each task and which members are responsible for each task."

The temporary staff had been hired in FY2020 and FY2019. Yet, it is not deemed efficient or cost-effective to use temporary staff to cover the workload under the current circumstances where the volume of work is rapidly increasing as the number of collaborations with other universities and research institutes increases.

As an immediate measure, the staff members in charge of networking have assigned a staff member from the Grants and Research Collaborations Section to support the networking activities while applying for a full-time administrative assistant.

**【Office of Technology Development and Innovation (TDIC)】**

- o TDIC is in the process of recruiting for positions that are currently vacant.
- o As for the need to reduce workload and reinforce the workforce, the work process will be streamlined by introducing software.



### 【Financial Management (FM)】

- o In the past three years, this division has reduced the number of staff by four to save cost. As a result, there is obvious staff shortage. Moreover, it is challenging to find the right personnel, and this division is constantly recruiting staff. As such, there is a strong need for proper staffing within the division, and managers are working together for a flexible adjustment of capacity and transfer of staff within the division.
- o When the introduction of a new accounting/travel expense system is considered in the future, the division would like to conduct a major review of the workflow.

### 【Buildings and Facilities Management (BFM)】

- o The problem of staffing shortage must be solved by the top management and Human Resource (HR) with a shared understanding of the needs of each unit and division after thorough consideration. This is not an easy task in a complex organization like OIST; as such, the needs are not being addressed adequately. In some cases, this division is forced to hire temporary staff because requests for additional staff are not approved. BFM is making efforts to complete the necessary tasks without affecting the physical and mental health of the temporary staff. Efforts are being made to make the top management, HR, and finance staff aware of the impact of staff shortages in critical business areas.

### 【Communication and Public Relations (CPR)】

- o This division has a temp staff member that handles the translation and interpretation work, but the workload continues to increase.
- o In the past, there were three full-time translators and interpreters, but now there are only two, and CPR is requesting for one staff member to cope with the increased workload. (For the time being, this position is covered by a temporary staff.)

### 【Human Resource (HR)】

- o By consolidating information and creating a system for sharing the information securely, HR strives to reduce administrative man-hours and create a process that does not depend on any person.
- o In the future, HR will work on the adoption of the CDC's variable work hours (currently in a trial period).

### 【Information Technology (IT)】

- o The content of work was carefully examined, and routine operations and work that does not need to be performed by OIST IT staff have been outsourced or assigned to a temporary staff.  
Specifically, IT has turned the network wiring tasks (i.e., preparation, arrangement, ordering, and implementation) into a routine operation that is outsourced; this enabled the division to assign one staff member, who had been working almost exclusively on these tasks, to more specialized tasks.

Furthermore, IT was able to allocate one staff member to tasks that are more specialized by assigning temporary staff to manage the network's system information, place orders, and coordinate with outside vendors.

- o IT checked for and found tasks that are overlapping within the division; therefore, IT relocated several IT engineers to the appropriate positions and consolidated sections in the IT Division to eliminate the overlapping parts.
- o The two members in charge of infrastructure of the IT Division and the Scientific Computing & Data Analysis Section (SCDA) of the Research Support Division (RSD) had overlapping responsibilities in the construction, operation, and maintenance of the virtual computer environment for the researchers, and by transferring the two members in charge of infrastructure to SCDA, the overlapping responsibilities were eliminated. This enabled SCDA to use the resources of the two members more effectively. By consolidating the inquiries to SCDA, the complexity of inquiries for the researchers was eliminated.

#### **【University Community Services (UCS)】**

- o The Vice President, who is responsible for the PEREX request process, voiced the need for transparency in PEREX allocations; however, when additional PEREX was not allocated for the divisions' essential operations, temporary staff were hired and trained. When the need was great, temporary staff members were transferred between the UCS sections. Furthermore, staff supported other staff members in different sections as needed. The division's work is being reviewed for efficiency and is prioritized to address the possibility of staff fatigue.
- o In cases where it is not possible to hire additional staff (PEREX or temporary staff) for specific tasks, measures were taken in accordance with the nature and characteristics of each section's work.

#### **Auditors' opinion**

- As a response to the labor shortage, many divisions cited the use of temporary staff, and some divisions cited it as an inevitable measure due to "long-term staff vacancies" or "no approval for additional staff."

Regarding the use of temporary staff, there are issues in several divisions, which are not specific to those divisions but rather to the circumstances surrounding temporary staff; therefore, this needs to be considered as an issue for the entire university.

Some divisions also mentioned efforts to improve operational efficiency in response to the labor shortage. This is the right response and the problem is expected to be addressed proactively.

#### **(3) Business progress management**

Management of the work progress is important in improving efficiency and preventing staff

from unintentionally overworking or wasting time, which would have an undesirable impact on both themselves and their respective divisions. For this reason, the auditors checked the system for managing the progress of work and the actions being taken in cases where work was not progressing as expected.

All the divisions cited the importance of understanding and information-sharing at meetings, but there were several divisions that cited the active involvement of managers, including division heads.

**【Office of the Provost and Research Support Division (RSD)】**

- o The work progress is checked at regular one-on-one meetings, as recommended by HR.
- o Managers, including division heads, such as the Provost or Assistant Provost, or both, participate in the section meetings to manage the work progress.

**【Office of the Chief Operating Officer (COO)】**

- o The COO's office holds regular weekly meetings for all members to understand the current situation.
- o Additionally, the structure for each section is as follows.
  - Rules and Procedures Section - For tasks that need to be divided among multiple staff members, Microsoft SharePoint and Teams and Excel spreadsheets for work progress management are used to share the progress of all members.
  - Compliance Section - Weekly meetings are held in each section to report and share the progress of the section members' work. In addition, managers hold meetings with their staff members as needed to minimize delays in work and maintain close communication so that work can be performed efficiently. For meetings and other events, progress is managed using a Gantt chart so that the entire section can understand the schedule.
  - Governmental Relations Section - After clarifying the division of roles within the section (main person in charge/deputy person in charge), the manager reviews the individual work content, work speed, and progress of each staff, and all the three staff members communicate with each other on a daily basis to understand and manage the progress of the section's work.
- o Since the COO's office has several urgent tasks; its members always clearly prioritize the tasks. Decision factors for coordination with other divisions include the task's importance, due date, workload, and man-hours required. If the work is not progressing as expected, the due date is extended depending on the case, and parallel work is put on hold to focus on the delayed work.
  - Rules and Procedures Section

In the second half of this fiscal year, this section received a series of requests for information disclosure and examination; in response, it determined the priority of each task based on importance and urgency. As a result, the preparation of materials for the document

management training, which is relatively less urgent, was delayed for several months.

- Compliance Section

If the section's internal work plan is delayed, not only the staff member in charge but also the entire section's members work together to make up for the delay.

**【Graduate School (GS)】**

- o GS coordinates the work of the entire division. Specifically, the Vice Dean first creates a complete project plan, sets specific goals and deadlines, and delegates the work to certain managers. Progress management is done by the delegated managers or the Vice Dean.
- o A step-by-step process is taken to address delays in work progress. It is always clear who, in the entire division, is accountable for each project, and this person follows up on the progress. If there are any problems, the Vice Dean provides support. The Vice Dean and the Dean constantly discuss the status of work within the division, and the Dean provides additional resources and support as needed.

**【Faculty Affairs Office (FAO)】**

- o Weekly meetings are held between the Dean of Faculty Affairs and each team to check on the work progress. A dashboard list is used to identify high-priority issues that need to be addressed by the Dean. To avoid overlapping responsibilities, the tasks within teams and the respective office are visualized, and a person is assigned to take charge of checking and sharing the work progress every week. When a new project is launched, a process chart is created, and the scope of each person's responsibility is confirmed. In addition, a shared email address for the team is set up so that information can be shared immediately.
- o If the work is not progressing, discussions are held in the weekly general meeting to identify the bottleneck. In so doing, the managers and the other teams are able to provide advice and cooperation.

**【Office of the Dean of Research (DoR)】**

- o In the Grants and Research Collaborations Section, the responsibilities for each task are clarified, and the managers point out areas that have not been fully accomplished during individual interviews. The staff members prepare weekly reports to visualize the work performance of all the staff members. The weekly report is used to manage most of the significant tasks on a weekly basis.

The staff members in charge of networking use Microsoft's "Teams" to manage the work progress of temporary staff located in different buildings and also to share information. "Teams" allows all members to share their tasks so that overdue tasks can be visualized and less busy temporary staff may assist with those tasks.

- o When there are work delays, the Grants and Research Collaborations Section responds by temporarily increasing the number of staff involved in the work or by changing the person in

charge. For example, the number of staff was increased when the workload was high because of the applications for the Kakenhi Grant.

For the staff members in charge of networking, various issues arise in the process of preparing for symposiums and workshops; however, the team communicates frequently until they come up with mutually satisfactory solutions. For example, when several workshops are scheduled at the same time, the temporary employees first discuss and adjust their work schedule, and then the External Partnership Coordinator (OIST staff) temporarily changes these temporary employees' shifts and manages them using the "Teams" shift management so that no person gets overloaded. The "external partnership coordinator" (a staff member) temporarily changes the shifts and uses the "Teams" shift management to manage the shifts to avoid overloading any staff member.

#### **【Technology Development and Innovation (TDIC)】**

- o When a manager judges that work progress in a section is stagnant and personnel needs to be supplemented, an ad hoc team is formed to deal with the situation. The "OIST Rice Project" is an example of a project that was accomplished through cross-sectional cooperation.

#### **【Financial Management (FM)】**

- o Weekly meetings are held at the divisional and sectional levels to share management of the work's progress. At present, there are no significant incidents of work delays.

#### **【Communication and Public Relations (CPR)】**

- o Information is shared during regular meetings at the divisional and sectional levels, and files are organized and shared at each level and by the task to manage progress and improve efficiency. When problems are found during these meetings or through regular communication, they are addressed by seeking advice from the managers and through a review of the plans and assignments.

#### **【Human Resource (HR)】**

- o In addition to holding weekly meetings to share information, the division uses Microsoft's OneNote and shares task lists on Teams to clarify "who will do what by when," and then holds weekly meetings on the progress status to organize and share the next action items.

#### **【Information Technology (IT)】**

- o The division uses a common task management system to keep track of the tasks at the divisional level, while detailed progress management is delegated to the section managers.

The managers also keep in mind the progress of the division's overall business and project plans and share any major delays or problems at regular section manager meetings.

If it is found in the regular section manager meetings that operational requirements or budget constraints are the reasons for not making progress, either a task force is formed or coordination is made by changing the schedule.

#### **【University Community Services (UCS)】**

- o Work progress is managed through regular communication regarding expectations, goals, and progress. Specifically, all team leaders/managers/senior managers meet with staff at least once a week to check on the status of their work and provide assistance if there are any difficulties. This makes the communication more effective.

The Vice-President for UCS believes that “effective orientation is an important step in ensuring work efficiency and staff satisfaction,” and she holds regular meetings with all members who report to her—usually weekly, but more often if necessary—and also provides support outside of meetings via email and phone.

- o If work is not proceeding as planned, the Vice President/managers/team leaders will review the status with the team and staff to develop a feasible plan for dealing with the problem or difficulty by (a) identifying the problem, (b) engaging in problem-solving, and (c) setting achievable deadlines. The actions taken to move the work forward will vary depending on the situation, but if the problem involves coordination with other divisions, the situation will be escalated to a higher level (including the senior managers/Vice President) for an appropriate response.

#### Auditors’ opinion

- As in the case of manpower shortage, some divisions consider that progress management is part of operational efficiency, while others emphasize the active involvement of managers, including the division heads. It is understood that appropriate measures are being taken according to the nature of the tasks.

In addition, there are divisions that have been effective in using very orthodox methods such as "deciding who is accountable," "deciding who is in charge," and "clarifying 'what to do by when.'" All those approaches are commendable.

It is expected that appropriate progress management will continue to be carried out.

#### (4) Budget Execution Management

Budget execution management is extremely important for the proper execution of the fiscal year’s budget, and the status and forecast of each division's execution management was confirmed for the fiscal 2020 budget, as well as the areas in execution management that need improvement.

Most of the divisions referred to budget adjustments in the biannual mid-term and year-end reviews conducted by the Financial Management Division. As a result of the effective implementation of these budget adjustments, no problems were found in the budget execution management, even under the current COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Some divisions mentioned how the budget adjustments and the budget should be handled.



**【Office of the Provost and Research Support Division (RSD)】**

- o A “mid-term review” and a “year-end review” were conducted, and the budget has generally been executed as planned. Regarding research equipment, some items are expected to be delivered late due to delays in manufacturing in many countries as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but these are being addressed through carry-over procedures.
- o We believe that it would be easier to manage the budgets of sections which is found to have a budget to be returned in the mid-term review could be changed on the system’s budget amount without waiting for the entire division to adjust its budget.

**【Faculty Affairs Office (FAO)】**

- o In FY2020, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the invitees notably visited the University for the Math Visitor Program faculty recruitment and faculty evaluation; therefore, the budget for those programs could not be executed. Each time the budget was reviewed, adjustments were made within the FAO, and the surplus budget within the FAO was returned to the Budget Section.
- o Budget planning for faculty hiring is difficult because the annual faculty hiring plan is decided only after the budget request is submitted. In FY2020, the number of hires was small and online interviews were conducted, thus avoiding major problems. However, in a year when many faculty members are hired in multiple fields, budget planning is more difficult. It will be easier to plan the budget if the hiring of faculty members can be planned on a multi-year basis; however, the fact that—the university has a single-year budget and that the budget planning is affected by the progress of the construction of laboratory buildings and the availability of research space—makes budget planning difficult.

In addition, since the annual budget request is made at a very early stage, it is difficult to plan the budget based on the business plan. Therefore, every time the budget is adjusted during the fiscal year, adjustments are made by returning the surplus budget to the Budget Section and then requesting for additional budget as necessary.

**【Financial Management (FM)】**

- o The budget for the entire university is adjusted by checking the status of the budget execution within the division at the time of the biannual budget execution review.
- o The budget for the Financial Management Division itself is small; thus, there is no problem.

**【Buildings and Facilities Management (BFM)】**

- o In addition to the section managers who manage the budget for each section, there is a budget team consisting of four staff members who manage the budget for all sections and coordinate among sections to ensure appropriate execution management.

**【Communication and Public Relations (CPR)】**

- o When requesting for a significant budget reduction in the budget, as specific numerical targets as

possible at an early stage to each division is desirable, and the same for the budget request. If you are asking for significant budget cuts, we would like you to provide each department with as specific numerical targets as possible at an early stage.

**【Information Technology (IT)】**

- o The division manages many projects that require continuous contracts and payment arrangements, such as software licenses and cloud subscriptions, and it adjusts the contracts' start date to the beginning of the fiscal year upon request from the Procurement and Supplies Section. However, the necessary budget is sometimes not allocated every fiscal year, and the budget allocation is not decided upon until just before the bidding process for the beginning of the fiscal year, which complicates the work.
- o As the end of the fiscal year approaches, the division is sometimes asked by the Budget Section to execute the budget. The IT division responds with its best efforts by reprioritizing the outstanding tasks and reevaluating each staff member's priorities; however, this practice complicates the division's work, and it is one of the reasons for the shortage of human resources.

**【University Community Services (UCS)】**

- o Regarding outsourcing at the CDC, due to the extremely fluid nature of the response—including the impact of staff replacement resulting from an increase in maternity leave, delays in the hiring schedule for new staff, changes in the class system necessary to deal with COVID-19, and the provision of special childcare schedules for parents who are essential workers—actual spending is expected to exceed the initial budget by approximately more than 7 million yen.
- o CDC provides childcare services; therefore, its nature is very different from that of the other divisions. In particular, there are so many variables to consider in personnel planning and the cost per person is high, therefore it is very difficult to make accurate predictions and control the budget's execution (even a small error can result in a difference of several million yen). It is more reasonable to remove the outsourcing costs from the budget request (OPEX) and allocate the actual costs in the same way as PEREX.

**Auditors' opinion**

- The budget execution management is functioning properly under the current framework, even under COVID-19 pandemic conditions. However, some divisions referred to how budget adjustment and budgeting should be handled. It is inferred that there are circumstances that make it difficult to realize them immediately. For example, increasing the number of opportunities for annual budget adjustments while maintaining the current method would mean greater administrative burden for all divisions, especially the Financial Management Division. Having said that, the comments from divisions that are making efforts in practice can serve as basis for improvement; therefore, they should be considered and discussed seriously.

#### (5) Coordination between divisions

As the size of the university expands, inter-divisional coordination is becoming more and more important at OIST.

In FY2018, the university established the COO as the coordinator of the administrative divisions and the Provost as the coordinator of the research and education divisions.

To confirm the status of coordination since the installation, the auditors reviewed cases of cross-divisional coordination that were considered successful and otherwise.

Although most of the cases were successful, there were several divisions that pointed out problems.

#### 【Office of the Provost and Research Support Division (RSD)】

- o The Occupational Health and Safety Section had been in charge of research integrity; however, in light of the nature of the work, this task was transferred to FAO. As for the allocation of research space, a space allocation coordinator has been assigned so that the Office of the Provost, FAO and the Facilities Operation and Use Section can work together efficiently.

#### 【Office of the Chief Operating Officer(COO)】

- o The establishment of the Chief Operating Officer (COO) is significant because it is meaningful in that "there is a clear structure for what had not been provided, and the work [that] has taken shape in a concrete way."

#### 【Graduate School (GS)】

- o GS has worked closely with the other divisions to improve the efficiency of the university's overall operations, and it specifically accomplished the following.
  - Integration of outreach activities - At the beginning of FY2020, the University Community Services, the Communication and Public Relations, and the Graduate School collaborated to integrate the personnel (PEREX and temporary staff) and focus the outreach activities on Graduate School to prevent overlapping responsibilities and to strengthen collaboration across the university.
  - Realignment of the management of students housing - The Buildings and Facilities Management Division (BFM) had managed the housing for faculty and researchers, while the Graduate School (GS) had managed the housing for students, which were inefficient. Thus, BFM and GS developed a more efficient way to manage student housing.

#### 【Faculty Affairs Office (FAO)】

- o The establishment of the Office of the Provost has led to stronger support for the Graduate School. The division of roles has been clarified, with FAO in charge of human resources for the Research Unit and the Office of the Provost in charge of research funds and equipment.

Information exchange between the Office of the Provost and FAO has become regular. The two offices have collaborated to launch and support the Research Unit. The exchange of information with the Office of the Provost is easy and quick, allowing for quick resolution of problems in the Research Unit.

- o However, the ways in which communication and coordination with the administrative divisions are handled under the COO needs improvement. Of all the administrative divisions under the COO, FAO requires the most frequent communication with Human Resource Division (HR). Smooth communication takes place both at the high level (between the Vice President for Human Resource and the Dean of Faculty Affairs) and at the working level between HR and FAO. However, some tasks that can be handled directly through FAO–HR cooperation still requires HR approval because the FAO–HR’s access to the database is restricted.

#### **【Office of the Dean of Research (DoR)】**

- o For the staff members in charge of networking, cooperation within the university is essential for collaboration with other institutions. One example of a collaboration that went well was the one with RIKEN, where the team succeeded in getting cooperation across divisions, including the FAO, Office of the Provost, and the Graduate School. Each division assigned a person to be in charge of the project, and after many meetings, the collaboration with RIKEN was smoothly realized as the "OIST Team."

#### **【Technology Development and Innovation (TDIC)】**

- o The following are examples of successful collaborations between TDIC and the other divisions. (There are no examples of unsuccessful collaboration with other divisions.)
  - TDIC worked closely with the Office of the President in planning the OIST Venture Capital Fund.
  - TDIC worked closely with Buildings and Facilities Management in the operation of the incubator facility.
  - TDIC held an introductory IP seminar for first-year students in cooperation with the Graduate School.

#### **【Financial Management (FM)】**

- o In terms of budget allocation and budget execution management, the volume of personnel expenses is large, and it is necessary to grasp the trends of these expenses properly. Both the Financial Management Division and the Human Resource Division are under the COO, which enables close coordination between the two divisions, and as a result, personnel expense management has been improved.
- o The coordination function of the COO is not sufficiently exercised because many matters are brought to the CEO without going through the coordination of the COO.

#### **【Buildings and Facilities Management (BFM)】**

- o The university's organization is under a process of continuous growth and change; there were no new changes in 2020, except for those required as a result of growth.

The roles of the COO and Provost are relatively new and are clearly in the developmental stages of their functions. Distribution of the administrative units, research units, and allocations of the divisions among the President, COO, and Provost need further study and improvement.

#### **【Communication and Public Relations (CPR)】**

- o The assignment of the Internal Communications Lead has enabled CPR to establish a system for gathering information from various divisions throughout the campus. Under the current COVID-19 pandemic, timely information sharing within the university is extremely important, and the Lead is coordinating closely with the Emergency Response Committee.
- o In addition to the above, CPR plays a substantial role in coordinating the requests from each division, as many requests are received from different divisions. In addition, a regular information sharing system has been established with the Office of the President, the Graduate School, and other divisions to provide timely, operational support. On top of that, CPR supports a wide range of divisions within the university on a project-by-project basis (SD Graduate School, 10-year anniversary, the Welcome Ceremony, the Graduation Ceremony, research projects, etc.).
- o To raise the executives' awareness and establish a response system within the university, CPR contracted with an external PR consulting firm to host the Crisis Communication Training and encouraged the executives and relevant managers to participate.

#### **【Human Resource (HR)】**

- o In response to the declaration of a state of emergency, the university had to reduce its operations temporarily; therefore, HR had to establish quickly the guidelines and an approval process for work-from-home arrangements for all staff including temporary staff. HR worked closely with the IT Division and CPR to develop the guidance promptly, and after obtaining the necessary confirmation from the General Counsel Office, HR was able to negotiate with outside vendors (temporary staffing companies) and deploy the guidance within the university.
- o In implementing e-staffing for the management of temporary staff, specific workflows were organized with the relevant divisions and sections (Procurement and Supplies Section, Accounting Section, Budget Section, and IT Division), and prior consultation was carefully conducted to ensure that the introduction of the system would not increase the workload of others.
- o It is difficult to control PEREX and relocation expenses because there are two separate recruitment offices for researchers and administrative staff.

#### **【Information Technology (IT)】**

- o "Interlocking meetings" are held with RSD, HR, GS, BFM, where IT division section managers participate in the meetings of other divisions on a monthly basis, and reports from the IT Division

are made and other divisions communicate directly with IT about their feedback and requirements.

The meetings helped communication among the divisions. As such, no major problems occurred.

#### 【University Community Services (UCS)】

o There was cooperation with some of the other divisions, but the effects and results were inconsistent.

□ UCS worked effectively with the Financial Division on two important projects: the establishment of the OIST Financial Aid Program and the development of procedures for the use of other financial resources to cover kitchen equipment repair and maintenance costs for the cafe and the restaurant.

□ UCS worked closely with the Compliance Section, General Counsel Office, Procurement and Supplies Section, and Recreation Services and Food Services worked closely together on bidding and contracting procedures, and so on.

□ The Provost and Emergency Response Committee (ERC) worked closely together with CDC to provide clear guidance for the COVID-19 pandemic.

□ The Occupational Health and Safety Section and most of the UCS sections (CDC, SAP, Food Services, Recreation Services, Language Education Section, and Resource Center) worked closely together in providing safe services under the COVID-19 pandemic. Close collaboration with the Occupational Health and Safety Section yielded many benefits, especially in Recreation Services.

□ Some sections of the Communication and Public Relations Division (CPR) and some UCS sections worked closely and effectively. For example, the Language Education Section and the Community Relations Section collaborated to provide the university's English language classes to the Onna Village community on a trial basis.

□ The Buildings and Facilities Management Division worked closely and effectively with the VPUCS and the Directors of CDC and SAP on several projects, including the installation of shades at CDC, expansion of CDC space, upgrading of the Seaside House space to accommodate SAP programs, and upgrading of SAP playground space.

□ The Resource Center made a suggestion to the Dean of Faculty Affairs (DFA) about piloting an "early onboarding program" to assist in the recruitment of new university faculty members, to which DFA agreed.

#### Auditors' opinion

■ Coordination and collaboration have been generally successful.

However, there were several divisions that mentioned issues, and for some of those issues, the factors or reasons were clarified. Such issues should be addressed as soon as possible.

#### (6) Improving work environment

Because the development of a more comfortable work environment will motivate employees and



serve as the foundation for the university's future development, the auditors confirmed the initiatives taken in FY2020, as well as the status of specific systems, such as paid leave, childcare leave, and nursing care leave, in FY2020.

With regard to encouraging employees to take paid leave, there were several divisions where supervisors, including managers, actively encouraged staff to take paid leave, and supervisors took the initiative in taking paid leave.

Meanwhile, some divisions stated that they would proceed with measures to deal with the situation, saying that "about half of the staff continues to be unable to take sufficient leave."

Childcare leave and nursing care leave are generally well known, and those who wish to take them are able to do so.

However, with regard to "developing a comfortable working environment," some divisions pointed out physical problems; for example, temporary staff members are using space in other divisions, and the need for new regulations to allow working from home was also mentioned.

**【Office of the Provost and Research Support Division (RSD)】**

- o The division held all-hands meetings for staff to get to know new staff members in the division.
- o Childcare leave, child nursing care leave, and shortened working hours have been taken by staff members, and the leave system is well established; therefore, there is nothing that particularly needs to be improved at this time.

**【Office of the Chief Operating Officer(COO)】**

- o The office responds to individual cases in a proper manner; therefore, there are no particular areas that need improvement.

**【Graduate School (GS)】**

- o The top priority for FY2020 was to provide a safe work environment in terms of both infectious disease prevention and mental health management. Specifically, with regard to the prevention of COVID-19, GS conducted its work in accordance with the OIST COVID-29 Guidelines at all times, and the supervisors (including the Dean of Graduate School) listened to the concerns of the staff and did everything possible to address them. In addition, since the office was very crowded before the pandemic, the staff members were physically relocated to avoid crowding in the office, and partitions for infection control were installed where deemed necessary. Moreover, division meetings were switched to virtual meetings.

For mental health management, meetings for all staff members who are working remotely were held once a week to provide ongoing support for their mental health.

As a more routine way to maintain cohesion within the division, the members have decided to alternate regular meetings with division-wide tee time. During the tee time, the members learn more about each other, thereby fostering teamwork (team spirit).

- o GS fully supports the use of paid leave, childcare leave, and nursing care leave, and staff members are fully aware of the existence of these systems and use them when necessary. However, this has resulted in the hiring of temporary staff to take over the duties of those who are on leave, creating a burden on temporary staff. In such cases, an imbalance in benefits and support between PEREX position staff and temporary staff becomes an issue.

**【Office of the Dean of Research (DoR)】**

- o The Grants and Research Collaborations Section had a temporary teleworking period due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At that time, a rotation was quickly arranged to reduce the risk of infection and workload for each staff member.

For the staff members in charge of networking, since the offices of the External Partnership Coordinator (OIST staff) and the temporary staff are not close to each other, Microsoft Teams is used as a communication tool. At present, the temporary staff members are working at the desks in the student study room, which does not provide a decent working environment. The Office of the Dean of Research has asked the Space Allocation Committee for office space, and a new location has been secured on the A floor of the center building.

- o In the Grants and Research Collaborations Section, there is currently one staff member on childcare leave. They interviewed her before she took maternity leave to confirm her work progress and exchange opinions and advice on how to cope with the changes in her life after childbirth.

**【Office of Technology Development and Innovation (TDIC)】**

- o In terms of areas for improvement, new regulations are needed to enable working from home.

**【Financial Management (FM)】**

- o One of the problems with the university's personnel system is the Western-style, fixed-term employment system. In other words, there is no Japanese-style system for building up one's career within the organization. Therefore, to improve on this point, the Financial Management Division has introduced an intra-divisional transfer system, whereby employees can submit their requests for transfer within the division, and managers assist to fulfill their request as much as possible.
- o Two of the current 38 staff members are on maternity or childcare leave. The university's maternity/childcare leave systems are well organized.

**【Buildings and Facilities Management (BFM)】**

- o One of the main factors that make the work environment uncomfortable is the forced hiring of temporary workers for positions that require permanent employees (OIST staff). This is due to the limitations of the PEREX budget; as such, OPEX is used for temporary staff. Although the benefits of temporary employees are not equal to those of permanent employees (OIST staff), the expectations from temporary staff are equal to those of permanent employees (OIST staff).

**【Communication and Public Relations (CPR)】**

- o Each manager shares detailed information with staff, understands their needs and issues, and provides appropriate advice and support to solve problems. Specifically, they conduct regular coaching, encourage staff that need training to participate in training programs, coordinate with other divisions such as HR, improve the environment around the desk, and provide opportunities for staff to interact with each other during lunch and tea time to deepen the bonds among staff.

#### **【Human Resource (HR)】**

- o HR worked to create a more comfortable working environment by securing space that allows for social distancing, expanding the space to allow each team to communicate efficiently, and rearranging desks.
- o If staff members with shorter hours work beyond their regular working hours, team members communicate with them and make it easier for them to leave the office. In addition, HR always sends a message to staff with young children—that they can rely on other team members to cover for them when their family is unwell, so that they will not have to worry about their work.

#### **【Information Technology (IT)】**

- o In October 2020, one-on-one meetings were held with all the staff except for temporary staff members.

The meetings revealed that: the high-level decision-making process related to their work was unclear and policies could change abruptly; silos existed in some of their work; and the technical scope in which engineers could work was limited by these factors. It was also pointed out that engineers could not take the time to improve their skills or work in new areas because they spent more time on their regular tasks.

To improve on these two points, efforts have been launched to develop a governance process for IT staff, including the use of pre-defined criteria for decision-making and record keeping. In addition, organizational changes were implemented to consolidate overlapping tasks and provide each staff member with a broader range of work challenges. The section managers and others continue to follow up with each staff member to ensure that the environment is better for all staff members as a whole and that each staff member can grow to become competitive outside the university.

- o According to the HEART HCM report, about half of the staff members of the IT Division are unable to take sufficient leave. IT is taking the necessary measures to deal with the situation where some tasks are personalized and concentrated on specific staff members.

#### **【University Community Services (UCS)】**

- o Regular meetings within the team are held to promote a cooperative work environment. Holding occasional luncheons (on and off campus) and meetings of all sections for information sharing purposes helps create a good working environment.

As simple examples, managers and team leaders are encouraged to show that they care about

their staff by praising their efforts and through problem solving when faced with difficulties, acknowledging staff efforts, and so on.

In addition, open discussion and active listening to the staff's concerns about COVID-19 are encouraged, with the problems being addressed by the entire division.

Additionally, specific actions are taken such as recognizing the efforts of retiring staff, holding end-of-year luncheons (within teams and across the division), celebrating the CDC's Teacher Appreciation Week, praising and expressing appreciation via the university's internal communication channels, commenting from the VPUCS to all staff during annual evaluations, and so on.

#### Auditors' opinion

- One of the efforts to improve the working environment, as mentioned by the divisions, is their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is extremely important for all workers and deserves high praise.

In particular, we commend HR, IT, and CPR staff for how quickly they responded, together with the General Counsel, to develop and disseminate guidelines about working from home.

There are some divisions that provide opportunities for new and old staff to get to know each other at various meetings, and these opportunities are also highly commendable, and it is hoped that they will be continued, although there are concerns that they may be disrupted because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is hoped that supervisors, including division heads, will continue to take an active role in demonstrating their stance and proactively interact with their staff.

#### (7) Anti-harassment measures

The importance of anti-harassment measures has been strongly recognized, and various measures have been taken at the university. The auditors also asked whether each division has taken its own measures and whether they are aware of recent trends related to harassment (e.g., secret recordings are accepted as evidence in Japanese courts).

Several divisions said that they would follow the university's measures and not take their own measures, and these divisions said they would actively participate in internal and external seminars and trainings.

Regarding the university's training program, many divisions mentioned the recent anti-harassment training by OIST hotline mediator Vicki Beyer, organized by HR.

Several divisions have been taking action based on the assumption of secret recording.

### **【Graduate School (GS)】**

- o GS provides support to both staff and students regarding harassment. For students, the policy on harassment and the process for reporting concerns are explained in the first-year career development course that is mandatory for all new students. For staff members, an "open door" policy that encourages the Dean and the Vice Dean of Graduate School to discuss issues directly with staff is in place. Opportunities are also provided for meetings between the Dean and each section of GS and individual meetings between each staff member (PEREX and temporary staff) and the Vice Dean.
- o The Dean of the Graduate School is aware of the trend of secret recording.

### **【Faculty Affairs Office (FAO)】**

- o For some time now, the Dean of Faculty Affairs has been ensuring that all staff members observe confidentiality in the event that they are consulted about harassment or other issues.
- o As a measure to prevent harassment in the research units, FAO has developed best practice guidelines to create a better research environment, which is used to educate newly appointed faculty members and researchers. In addition, training on management and leadership in the research units is held annually for faculty members and researchers.
- o The staff members of FAO–HR receive many consultation requests regarding harassment in the research units, and when consulting or meeting with faculty or researchers, they keep in mind that the conversation may be recorded. In addition, they always try to gather information on laws and rules regarding harassment.
- o As for human resource education, the staff members have participated in training and seminars on dealing with harassment inside and outside the university.

### **【Financial Management (FM)】**

- o When the Vice President in charge receives information that indicates harassment, the VP will immediately consult with the manager and intervene as appropriate.

### **【Human Resource (HR)】**

- o HR encourages all division staff to participate in harassment training for managers.
- o HR recognizes that communication is the most important, and encourages their staff to communicate. If it is not easy to talk during work hours, they will respond after hours.
- o HR shares case studies from inside and outside the university.

### **【Information Technology (IT)】**

- o To make it easy for people to consult when concerns arise, IT always shows that the division manages information in an appropriate manner and prioritizes consultations over other tasks.
- o The division tries to follow up with each case before the case escalates.

### **【University Community Services (UCS)】**

- o Consistent, honest, and open communication can be very effective in combating harassment. By

creating an environment of trust and support, staff can feel comfortable raising issues, and managers can help remedy the situation. Team leaders/managers are encouraged to maintain this environment and to raise any difficulties or concerns to the VPUCS. Team leaders/managers are also encouraged to take detailed notes about any concerns raised to their attention and discuss specific concerns with HR.

#### Auditors' opinion

- In this university, supervisors, including the division heads, have shown sincerity in responding to requests for consultations.

Harassment, by its very nature, is something that an employee is hesitant to discuss. Some divisions acknowledge the difficulty of such consultations, and it should continue to be acknowledged in all the divisions.

#### (8) Training programs

OIST has mandatory training programs in various fields. (The information security training is discussed in the next section.) The auditors checked the completion rate by division and the efforts being made to maintain or improve the completion rate.

With the exception of a few divisions, all divisions have achieved or are expected to achieve 100% completion rate.

To maintain and improve the completion rate, some divisions are actively encouraging staff to take the training by utilizing the data related to the course, in addition to encouraging employees during meetings or through their supervisors and division heads.

#### 【Office of the Chief Operating Officer(COO)】

- o After the due date (about one month after the beginning of the year), this office received from HR a list of the staff's completion rate and encouraged those who had not completed the training to do so. In addition, in December 2020, HR was asked to set up a system where the office managers can view the training completion status report on "eFront" so that the progress can be checked as needed.

#### 【Graduate School (GS)】

- o The Dean and Vice Dean of the Graduate School review the university's training reports (database) and remind all staff at the division meetings at the beginning of the year to complete any uncompleted training.

#### 【Faculty Affairs Office (FAO)】

- o FAO regularly checks the completion rate within the division and sends reminders to and monitors those who have not yet taken the necessary training.



The Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training is mandatory for all researchers (including faculty and students); it is based on the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's *Guidelines for Responding to Misconduct in Research Activities*. At the beginning of each fiscal year, those who have not taken the training in the previous year are identified, tracked, and requested to take the training.

Starting next year, FAO will work with other divisions, such as the Graduate School and the Office of the Provost, to promote awareness of the RCR training and to reduce the amount of time spent on tracking down those who have not yet taken the training.

**【Human Resource (HR)】**

- o As the division that includes the Training and Education Section and promotes staff development, HR takes the initiative in promoting a "learning organization." In addition to the online training programs newly introduced this fiscal year for HR professionals to acquire knowledge on labor management, HR is also encouraging staff to strive for self-development by using free HR-related webinars that have increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**【University Community Services (UCS)】**

- o When a new staff member joins UCS, mandatory training is included as part of the onboarding process (especially in CDC, where staff turnover is higher than in other sections).

**Auditors' opinion**

- This is highly commendable under the severe circumstances where the shortage of manpower has not yet been resolved, with most divisions having achieved 100% or expecting to achieve 100% completion, and it is hoped that this completion rate will be maintained.

While the basic strategy for training participation is through direct encouragement by supervisors, including the division heads, either at meeting or in person, some divisions use data to ensure that staff members complete the training. It is desirable to implement such measures as needed in those divisions that have not yet done so.

**(9) Improving the management skills of staff**

The university is in urgent need of improved management because of its scale expansion, especially in the management of mid-level staff (division of work, management of work progress, management of subordinates' working hours, etc.).

For this reason, the auditors asked the divisions how they instruct to improve the staff's management skills—whether they found any of the training programs provided by the university to be meaningful and useful for their work, and whether they had their staff participate in any external training programs that were useful for their development and the improvement of their management skills. In addition, we checked whether there are any training programs provided by the university that are meaningful and useful for improving management skills and whether the

staff participated in external training programs that are useful for their development and the improvement of their management skills.

Many divisions mentioned or highly evaluated the training of the university from various viewpoints and perspectives.

In terms of external training, all the divisions have been very proactive in encouraging their employees to participate.

**【Office of the Provost and Research Support Division (RSD)】**

- o RSD participated in the Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) training series on genetic resources at the National Institute of Genetics. These used to be held in Tokyo on an irregular basis but were changed to an online series, which was very effective for the division because they could participate in more training programs without the need to travel; moreover, the costs are lower, and the content is useful.

**【Graduate School (GS)】**

- o GS requires all PEREX staff to spend up to 5% of their working hours on personal, professional development; this is clearly outlined in the annual goals of the HR platform. Most of these professional development training programs are focused on management skills.

**【Faculty Affairs Office (FAO)】**

- o This year, the Training and Education Section of HR held a number of training programs and seminars for managers, which provided good opportunities for mid-level managers.

In particular, the "Management Development Program" series offered by the Training and Education Section on labor laws and the goal setting exercise provided a good learning opportunity for managers regardless of their level of experience.

- o In addition to the education opportunities provided on campus, managers are encouraged to participate actively in training to acquire knowledge and skills that are important in their work. Specifically, they are encouraged to make plans to participate in training for self-development as part of their divisional goals at the beginning of the fiscal year.

**【Financial Management (FM)】**

- o The Ministry of Finance's training program for government-affiliated corporation accounting clerks is a month-long specialized training program that has been highly effective. In addition, the University of Tokyo's practical training program, which provides on the job training over a period of one year, has provided an opportunity to develop the staff's skills in a different environment. The division plans to continue this training program.

**【Communication and Public Relations (CPR)】**

- o The management forum previously held by the Training and Education Section of HR was well

received and effective in developing young managers.

- o In the future, the division plans to have staff participate in online programs as much as possible because of the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and budget constraints.

#### **【Human Resource (HR)】**

o By planning and implementing training for managers and the evaluation guidance organized by the Training and Education Section, HR has been able to have more dialogues with other managers. It seemed that HR has been able to build a foundation for managers to think together about organizational improvement.

o LinkedIn Learning also offers a wide range of management skills programs.

o All Human Resources Division staff members were required to take the New Labor Law Seminar called CEI-Learning (e-learning) offered by the university's contracted labor and social security attorney. Although it was initially thought to be a basic training for HR staff, the content was in-depth and useful for university personnel. Since the experience level of the staff varies, it is difficult for the knowledge to take root unless applied in practice. The division plans to guide their staff so that they can make use of the knowledge in practice.

#### **【Information Technology (IT)】**

o IT has a standardized process for conducting work regarding information technology, called ITIL, with which the IT division complies. For this reason, staff members are encouraged to take the ITIL. For FY2021, IT plans to define the necessary skills in advance, analyze the gaps, improve management training, and enhance engineers' skills.

#### **【University Community Services (UCS)】**

o The Senior Manager supported the training of the Education Coordinator, and it is hoped that similar intra-departmental training will be restructured in the future.

o Previously, staff members who are at the early levels of their careers were provided with a management forum that was open to participants. At least three of the current staff members in leadership positions in UCS have participated, and all of them reported that it was a valuable experience.

o The team leaders/managers encourage staff to make time during work hours to achieve the HR goal of 40 hours of training/personal development each year.

#### **Auditors' opinion**

- Many divisions mentioned and highly evaluated (from various perspectives) the training programs that the university offers; however, some mentioned training programs that were previously offered but are not currently provided. It would be beneficial to offer training based on the staff's specific needs.

As for external training, all the divisions were very active in making sure that their staff

participated in the training; however, certain divisions mentioned that some external training programs have been cancelled or that their staff could not participate because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some divisions explained that online training enabled them to save costs. As the budget of the university as a whole is getting tighter, it is recommended that participation in online training be considered.

#### (10) Ensuring information security

Ensuring information security is very important not only to protect the continuation of daily operations and research but also to protect the university's information assets and external credibility.

For this purpose, the auditors checked the completion rate for the mandatory information security training, as well as the occurrence of information security incidents in FY2020.

As for attendance, all divisions have achieved or expect to achieve 100% completion.

In addition, some divisions have invited the person in charge to give supplementary explanations.

There were no information security incidents that resulted in any damage.

#### 【Office of the Provost and Research Support Division (RSD)】

- o RSD requested the Chief Information Security Officer to provide a more detailed supplementary explanation of the content of the training on information security at the RSD meeting attended by the section leaders.

#### 【Buildings and Facilities Management (BFM)】

- o A special Q&A session on the "University's Rules on Personal Information Protection" was held with representatives from the IT Section and the Rules and Procedures Section.

#### 【Communication and Public Relations (CPR)】

- o The administrator of Vimeo, a video distribution service, hijacked the CPR account, and the account was deleted. After restoring the account, the account for the cloud service was updated with the advice of IT. No similar incidents have occurred since then.

#### 【Information Technology (IT)】

- o IT holds privileged access to the system. Privileged access is granted after IT personnel sign and confirm that they understand the rules of system administration.
- o In 2020, there were several incidents in which the servers managed by the university were attacked via the Internet, causing service instability. IT monitored the attacks and was able to detect them at an early stage, and IT implemented specific measures such as blocking the

communication and strengthening the settings.

**【University Community Services (UCS)】**

- o Although this is not an information security incident, an anonymous complaint was received by IT regarding the use of photos on Google at the CDC. As a result, the Director of CDC worked with the Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) and the Assistant Director to develop more stringent procedures regarding taking and sharing photos with CDC families. This also included a review of CDC's personal information security.

**Auditors' opinion**

- All the divisions have achieved or expect to achieve 100% completion of the training, which signifies that the encouragement from supervisors, including division heads, seems to have been effective.

In addition, several divisions have invited the staff in charge to receive supplementary explanations, and such proactive efforts are expected to have a positive impact on staff awareness.

It is hoped that these efforts will be continued in the future.

**(11) Efforts for disaster prevention and safety and health management**

Disaster prevention and safety and health management are extremely important, not only to protect human lives but also to protect the university's assets and credibility.

In FY2020, fire drills, led by the Buildings and Facilities Management, were also conducted at the university, and the auditors confirmed the status of each division's response, as well as the division's own efforts to raise awareness of disaster prevention and safety and health management.

Regarding the response to the fire drill, all divisions indicated that there were “no problems with the response” or that “the response was smooth.”

However, there were variations among the divisions with regard to their own initiatives.

**【Office of the Provost and Research Support Division (RSD)】**

- o The Manager of the Occupational and Health and Safety Section /Emergency Response Coordinator provides explanations as necessary at the RSD meetings attended by the section leaders.

**【Graduate School (GS)】**

- o The initial firefighting team and the evacuation guidance team, which were selected in advance, had preliminary meetings, and the drill was completed without any problems. In cases where there were personnel changes in the initial firefighting team or evacuation guidance team, it was mentioned that the "successors had not been selected" or "the handover was not completed;"

however, the necessary changes were made after the drill.

There is one thing needs improvement: some sections have been moved to temporary offices because of the COVID-19 pandemic; this was not necessary last year. This means that thorough preparations should be made in advance to ensure that there are no omissions in the response to emergencies.

**【Faculty Affairs Office (FAO)】**

- o One of the two fire prevention personnel in Laboratory 4, where FAO is located, was an FAO staff; however, since there was only one safety confirmation device and transceiver in the laboratory, it took a considerable amount of time to confirm the safety of the staff (ID scan) during the evacuation drill. To prepare for an actual disaster, the number of safety confirmation responders, safety confirmation devices, and transceivers should be increased.

**【Office of the Dean of Research (DoR)】**

- o In conducting symposia and workshops, the staff members in charge of networking seek advice from OHS and the Provost, who are in charge of COVID-19-related issues at the university.

**【Information Technology (IT)】**

- o IT work is performed in areas that require consideration of health and safety, such as the Data Center, network rooms, and the Interstitial Space System (ISS). When entering such areas, employees are authorized to enter using an IC card after they sign and confirm that they have received training and understand the precautions. In addition to the security cameras installed by the Buildings and Facilities Management, CCTV is installed for recording purposes.

**【University Community Services (UCS) 】**

- o The CDC conducts monthly fire drills separate from the university's fire drill.
- o The SAP held one of its own fire drills and learned how to use a fire extinguisher.
- o The UCS's efforts to raise awareness of disaster prevention and to manage safety and health are as follows.
  - CDC conducts monthly disaster drills, bi-monthly earthquake drills, and annual Sasumata drills.
  - The CDC group leader developed safety checklists to be checked daily for the classroom and CDC facilities.
  - CDC, together with the COO, developed CDC's Typhoon Closure Policy (including criteria, timing, and procedures for closure and reopening of the CDC facilities).
  - Recreation Services is located in the Village Center and works closely with the external vendor that manages the building.
  - Recreation Services worked with the Occupational Health and Safety Section and the Buildings and Facilities Management Section to improve safety within the facility (e.g., installation of AEDs and emergency phones).
  - The Education Coordinator and the SAP Director developed an emergency plan for the

university staff's children and students in case their schools in Okinawa are closed.

- o UCS is responsible for the delivery of services within the university and has taken a number of precautions to ensure that COVID-19 is widely understood by the university community with the assistance of the Communication and Public Relations Division.

#### Auditors' opinion

- The apparent variation in the divisions' own efforts is largely due to the difference in the nature of the divisions' work.

In addition, the results of the fire drills have revealed areas that need improvement, and such improvements should be made accordingly.

#### (12) Business Continuity Plan (BCP)

The Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is an essential initiative for ensuring the continuation of operations and research and early recovery to minimize damages in the event of an emergency such as a natural disaster.

In this regard, the auditors confirmed the items that the divisions have worked on in FY2020 and the items they plan to work on in the future.

While some divisions did not have their own initiatives and said that they "will follow the university's BCP," other divisions were actively engaged in a wide range of initiatives.

#### 【Office of the Provost and Research Support Division (RSD)】

- o RSD has decided to convert certain space in the facility into a laboratory that can be used for PCR testing to prepare for a possible spread of COVID-19. The division plans to renovate the facility so that it can be immediately operational in case of future emergencies.

#### 【Graduate School (GS)】

- o GS developed a revised BCP for the "operational reduction period" during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and submitted it in response to a request from the Office of the Chief Operating Officer.

#### 【Office of the Dean of Research (DoR)】

- o For the staff members in charge of networking, symposia and workshops were planned flexibly to accommodate any contingency. The joint workshop with Tohoku University on February 17, 2021 was held in a hybrid format, both physical and virtual.

#### 【Office of Technology Development and Innovation (TDIC)】

- o TDIC continued to cross-train staff so that work can continue in the event of staff absences or sick leave.

- o To reduce the risk of losing information due to staff resignations or disasters, TDIC is considering the introduction of a CRM software that can manage information such as contacts, meetings, business associate information, and contracts.

#### 【Communication and Public Relations (CPR)】

- o In FY2020, CPR was unable to conduct a drill that includes residents of the neighboring community because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### 【Information Technology (IT)】

- o When work-from-home arrangements were implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, IT evaluated the priority of business continuity and identified the initial response in case business continuity became necessary. In addition, at that time, IT introduced a system to record the Shift, the location of the staff members, and implemented operations that enabled tracing their location.

#### 【University Community Services (UCS) 】

- o Because of the nature of their work, much of the UCS's FY2020 Business Continuity Plan (BCP) efforts focused on maintaining services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- o Before work-from-home requests were received records came from the COO (during the period when the university was closed), and a checklist for work-from-home arrangements was created within UCS so that supervisors could check on all staff at least once a day.
- o The challenge that UCS is facing in terms of business continuity in the future is how to continue to provide high-quality services in the face of OPEX reductions and PEREX limitations as the university continues to grow and the demand for services increases. The second challenge is the of subsidies. The Recreation Services needs to use other financial resources to purchase equipment and provide recreational opportunities. They also need to use other financial resources to maintain and replace the Café and the Restaurant's equipment/facilities. The need to find and use other financial resources places a heavy time burden and stress on the staff. Therefore, UCS needs to continue to address these issues.

#### Auditors' opinion

- The difference between a division that does not have its own initiatives and a division that is actively working on a wide range of initiatives seems to be largely due to the nature of the division's business. However, constant improvement of BCP is desirable. It is also desirable for the divisions that do not have their own initiatives to refer to the divisions that are actively working on BCP.

#### 4. Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Various organizations were forced to respond in different ways to the COVID-19 pandemic. This university is no exception, and the ingenuity of each division in confronting and



responding to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic is a great asset to the university as a whole.

To share these assets, the auditors checked the responses, reflections, and improvements that each division has made.

All the divisions have been taking proactive responses as discussed in the following.

**【Office of the Provost and Research Support Division (RSD)】**

- o At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, to cope with the shortage of resources, RSD prepared and distributed disinfectant solutions and developed units for mask sterilization. Subsequently, PCR tests and antibody testing systems were set up and used for administrative, clinical, and internal testing.
- o In establishing the testing system, the burden on certain staff members increased; therefore, the division recognized the need to train personnel who can support them.
- o During the remote work period, the division set up an "office tea" time once a week to talk about something other than work and to check on how the staff members were doing.

**【Office of the Chief Operating Officer(COO)】**

- o After implementing the emergency remote work system in May 2019, the COO Office as a whole has been working to reduce office densities across the university, and the COO Office has made efforts to increase remote meetings by introducing a shift system and other innovations. In July 2020, when the allocation of office space in the Center Building was reviewed, the entire COO organization was relocated to Laboratory 4 to reduce office density. The Office continues the efforts to increase remote meetings.
- o The Rules and Procedures Section made a request in the name of the CEO to omit or postpone the stamping of the official seal on the documents submitted to the Okinawa Prefectural Government, while the manager and staff took turns to come to the campus to deal with the urgent stamping of the official seal.
- o The Compliance Section first arranged for laptops for all section members so that they could work from home, and while they were working from home, they held regular section meetings using Zoom and were able to work without delay. During the regular section meetings, they checked the progress of the work and the physical and mental health of each individual and found that some staff members were restricted from accessing the shared files of the section because they had not finished arranging for laptops when they first started working from home; this resulted in some unnecessary work.

**【Graduate School (GS)】**

- o While implementing safety measures to minimize the risk of infection, GS maintained frequent

and solid communication with students, faculty, and staff about how to respond to the fast-changing and fluid situation on a daily basis.

**【Faculty Affairs Office (FAO)】**

- o Prior to the start of the telework period, the division prepared the PC/system and checked if their daily work could be completed online.
- o The entire FAO held a general meeting at 10:00 every morning during telework to check the staff's physical condition and report on the day's work. This enabled the entire office to share the progress of their work.
- o In cases where a seal or signature is required, those that could be digitized were done within FAO. There were many cases that could not be digitized in the research units; therefore, Research Unit Assistants were required to work on campus. This issue needs further consideration.
- o In FY2020, the faculty recruiting team was unable to invite candidates to visit the campus, which caused a delay in hiring. Seminars and interviews with the candidates were held online, and virtual tours of research facilities were conducted to proceed with the recruitment.
- o In 2020, the faculty evaluation team was also unable to invite 50 external review panels; therefore, the unit reviews and tenure reviews were conducted online for the first time. By making sure that the panels from Europe and the Americas would not be review panels of the same research unit, external panels and OIST attendees were able to avoid online meetings in the early morning or late evening hours. It is impossible for participants from three continents to attend the meeting together. Therefore, FAO combined the Japan/Asia/Australia region with either Europe or Americas for online meetings.

**【Office of the Dean of Research (DoR)】**

- o In the Grants and Research Collaborations Sections, during the temporary teleworking period, the rotation was promptly arranged to reduce the risk of infection and work-related problems. From the perspective of personal information management, a university-loaner laptop is required for work-at-home arrangements. For this reason, it is desirable for the university to improve the system further so that laptops with a certain level of performance can be loaned without delay.

For the staff members in charge of networking, symposia, and workshops were planned flexibly to accommodate any contingency. For example, the joint workshop with Tohoku University held on February 17, 2021, was a hybrid format that could be held both virtually and physically (see (12). For the management of temporary staff, the Office tried frequent communication using Microsoft Teams.

**【Office of Technology Development and Innovation (TDIC)】**

- o Efforts were made to inform the staff regarding OIST's COVID-19 Guidelines. Flexible arrangements were made to introduce work-from-home arrangements and shifts to avoid close quarters in the office. Managers are trying to ascertain whether staff members who traveled or

worked outside of the Okinawa Prefecture were properly PCR-tested. One area that must be addressed is the need for more flexible rules regarding work-from-home arrangements at OIST.

**【Financial Management (FM)】**

- o When there was a shortage of alcohol for disinfection, the division quickly adopted a policy of using alcohol for testing and made efforts to secure alcohol for disinfection purposes.

**【Buildings and Facilities Management (BFM)】**

- o BFM has confirmed that all the Japanese government's rules, university instructions, and common-sense preventive measures are being followed.

**【Communication and Public Relations (CPR)】**

- o CPR played an important role in the internal communications on campus.

In addition, three town hall meetings for the campus were held under the leadership of the Vice President for Communication and Public Relations to strengthen the cohesiveness of the campus.

CPR also created a PCR testing application form for campus personnel and created testing information and workflows for the Health Center.

- o Outside the University, the division was able to promote the social contribution activities of the university effectively by timely publicizing all COVID-19-related research and responses. Specifically, CPR launched a special webpage and introduced a wide range of COVID-19-related projects by researchers, including PCR testing, antibody testing, and the activities of volunteers.

CPR also conducted proactive PR activities for the media—responding to many inquiries and negotiating with local newspapers to publish a series of columns by the President, Provost, and faculty members.

As a result, the university's role in the COVID-19 pandemic became widely known, leading to greater media coverage ("NHK Special" and others), which is believed to have enhanced the university's reputation.

**【Human Resource (HR)】**

- o In terms of dealing with newly hired members, HR always provided the latest information to them, especially because the Japanese government's policy on accepting foreign nationals frequently changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The new hires could not receive a regular visa or entry. Additionally, the websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare were all confusing and difficult to understand. As such, HR created its own checklists to provide guidance on the processes involved when entering Japan and the necessary documents.
- o The quarantine period and other necessary matters were decided upon after seeking the opinion of the university's clinic until the PCR testing on campus was operated smoothly.
- o COVID-19 was added to the one-way accident insurance for travelers from abroad, but since the accident insurance required upon entry into Japan does not include insurance against illnesses, HR

purchased one-way travel insurance separately.

- o It was decided that the university would pay the storage fees for those who had already moved their belongings but were unable to enter the country. Since public transportation is not available from the airport to the hotel where they will stay during the quarantine period, and the shuttle bus operated by the quarantine office is not available for new arrivals, the University has decided to pay for the use of taxicabs designated by the quarantine office. The cost of accommodation and daily allowance during the quarantine period was borne by the research unit and the division.
- o As a point for reflection and improvement, the required documents and forms often changed, and even if HR prepared them in advance, they were often asked to fill out new forms, such that they had to prepare the required documents just before applying for a visa or entering Japan. HR was unable to make accurate judgment because of differences in the responses to their inquiries from various ministries, agencies, and diplomatic missions overseas, and even when they were told that something was not necessary, this advice turned out to be incorrect. Thus, they had to prepare the respective document.
- o As for human resource management, the following measures were taken: granting of 10 days of special leave (to cover the PCR quarantine period), temporary work-from-home arrangements, consideration of the regulations for such arrangements, and flexible response to changes in the first work dates.

As for areas for improvement, HR was busy dealing with the situation, but there was also inconsistency in the content that the government and other organizations were sending out, and there was a lack of clarity about the latest information.

#### 【Information Technology (IT)】

- o Prioritizing the tasks to be performed for business continuity and mutual understanding of the sections regarding the services that they must continue were very important preparations from the perspective of business continuity.
- o In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, many staff members worked from home, and more and more of the research activities were conducted online. IT believes that they were able to provide the network access and online tools that each staff member needed without delay. In addition, the outline of these tools and how to use them were concisely summarized, and the information was appropriately provided to the users.
- o In the IT Division, online communication, information management, and meetings were conducted while working from home, and each of the division members devised ways to use the online tools to promote the planned projects without any major confusion. The specific innovations are as follows.
  - IT used Microsoft's "Teams" Shift to track the working status of each member. This made it possible to adjust the tasks that must be done on campus and assign tasks that must be done flexibly on-site.

- By separating the chat function of Teams and the Teams function into two types of communication—one as an extension of normal conversation and the other to promote the business while keeping records like emails and meetings—the IT division was able to keep records while facilitating online discussions.
- As an extension of this, IT has come to the conclusion that the ability to use "Teams" phones to receive calls with outside numbers regardless of where one is working is beneficial, and IT has decided to migrate the university's phones in FY2021. It is believed that this will allow IT to achieve cost savings while improving user convenience and the quality of their telephone services.
- o However, as time passed, there were cases where some staff members relaxed their sense of emergency by talking loudly without wearing masks. Although IT has taken measures such as being considerate with other staff, continuous reminders are necessary.

#### 【University Community Services (UCS) 】

- o As a service delivery division, each section has developed detailed plans and measures to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic while maintaining its services. All these measures have been reviewed by the manager of the Occupational Health and Safety Section, and a summary has also been shared.
- o Some procedural updates were needed, especially at the CDC, which was reviewed by the ERC and the OIST doctor, and communicated directly to the CDC parents with the support from CPR.
- o When the CDC was closed, the staff used the time to focus on professional development and on providing remote education using Zoom (usually two daily meetings with the children in the class) to provide continuity in education and daily life. In addition, the teachers produced YouTube-based activities for the CDC children. The SAP staff used the time for professional development and to update the SAP parent–teacher handbook, which were difficult to do during normal working hours.
- o VPUCS is proud of the way the UCS faced the challenges of COVID-19 and dealt with them. The services were maintained or enhanced during what was a difficult and stressful situation for all. VPUCS does not believe that there is room for improvement in the COVID-19 preparedness and efforts of the UCS staff and sections.

#### Auditors' opinion

- All of the divisions are making sincere efforts in accordance with the nature and characteristics of their work under the extremely difficult circumstances they have encountered for the first time, and are not lacking in consideration and care for the members to whom they belong, which is highly appreciated.

In particular, the auditors commend all divisions that have supported IT to increase productivity in research activities during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing various ways to

access the network, including support for efficient online research activities and online tools.

Regarding work from home, some divisions wanted to allow for more flexible practices, not limited to dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic; however:

- The geographical situation (a large number of remote islands scattered over a vast sea area, remote from the mainland Japan) is one of the special circumstances of Okinawa;
- It will be of great significance to Okinawa if OIST "can set an example (achieving high results in various aspects despite geographical and physical remoteness)."

Furthermore, considering the aspect of cost reduction for the university, it would be desirable if more flexible work-from-home arrangements are considered.

## 5. Individual items

### (1) Contribution to the development of Okinawa

As the basis for the establishment of the university (i.e., the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology School Corporation Act [Act No. 76 of 2009]), Article 1 stipulates that:

*the purpose of this Act is to provide for necessary matters concerning the establishment and operation of the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology in order to promote internationally distinguished research and education on science and technology based in Okinawa (within Okinawa Prefecture; the same shall apply hereinafter), and thus contribute to the promotion and self-sustaining development of Okinawa and to the development of science and technology worldwide.*

The auditors confirmed with the Office of the Provost and Research Support Division (RSD) about the contribution to the development of Okinawa. The results of the confirmation are as follows.

Examples in the area of research and education include the "conclusion of a mutual cooperation agreement with the Okinawa City Board of Education" and the "acceptance of nursing students from within the prefecture as interns at the Health Center."

The former is a mutual cooperation and collaboration agreement between the university and the Okinawa City Board of Education regarding academic research and human resource development, signed on November 12, 2020. This is the first time in the prefecture that an agreement has been signed with a municipality for research in the field of natural history, including biodiversity and the natural environment.

The latter is a continuation of the program, but in FY2020, the university accepted a new student from Meio University.

As for future issues, RSD is considering accepting as interns students from the prefecture. This is aimed at providing technical support to the Okinawa National College of Technology, which is regarded as having a high level of education.

The auditors commend OIST for its steady promotion of human resource interactions, as it has

increased the number of commendable cases, even under the COVID-19 pandemic, when human exchange can be stagnant.

## (2) Outreach activities for junior and senior high school students in and outside Okinawa

Outreach activities for junior and senior high school students in and outside of Okinawa are essential for attracting excellent students.

Confirmation was made with the Graduate School regarding outreach activities for junior and senior high school students in and outside of the Okinawa Prefecture. The results of the confirmation are as follows.

Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, GS had to suspend their projects and activities that target junior high school and high school students in and outside of Okinawa, but they resumed these activities around the end of September 2020 when the schools reopened. The following are the results of the visits and the plans for future projects during the fiscal year:

- Onna Village Unna Junior High School (September–October 2020): Three times as an integrated learning class,
- Kyuyo High School (SSH; October 2020): Correspondence science workshop,
- Okinawa AMICUS International (January 2021): Exchange events with OIST students,
- Koyo High School (SSH; February 2021): Correspondence as SSH school inquiry-based class presentation,
- Naha International High School, Okinawa (Feb. 2021): Lecture on presentation in English for first to third graders (online lecture), and
- HiSci Lab Workshop (March 2021): STEM Workshop for female students in STEM.

To evaluate the current status of the science outreach program, a survey of the teachers and students was conducted after the program. In general, the program received high evaluations. Examples of comments are: "The program increased my interest in science;" "I was able to feel closer to OIST;" and "The program can contribute to science education."

In the future, they plan to study how to measure the program's effects on the participants and how to collect statistics.

The auditors find this highly commendable and hope that this will continue to be implemented.

## (3) Efforts to obtain competitive research funds

Confirmation was made with the Dean of Research regarding the acquisition of competitive research funds. The results of the audit are as follows.

In FY2020, the amount of funding that was received for funded research (academic) decreased. This is because a funded research (academic: Post-Kei), whose research period ended in the last fiscal year, had been awarded a budget of over 80 million yen every year.

External research funding rises significantly and transiently when so-called "star researchers"

win large projects. Therefore, there is no need to regard a temporary decrease as a major problem.

In FY2020, the COVID-19 pandemic also affected the funding agencies, causing delays in the selection of applications, which in turn delayed the budget allocation. It is expected that this situation will continue for some time in FY2021, and it will be difficult to make comparisons with the previous actual external funding figures.

However, there are high hopes for the future, as OIST researchers were selected for a moonshot research and development project worth several hundred million yen in FY2020, and three projects were selected for the JST Program to Support Emergent Research Support (a large-scale project worth up to 50 million yen for seven years) in February 2021.

The auditors would like to see the university continue to receive competitive research funding, as it is an easy way to demonstrate to the outside world the high quality of its research.

#### (4) Budget execution management in facility and equipment management

With regard to budget execution management in facility and equipment management, the auditors checked with the Buildings and Facilities Management Division (BFM) whether information sharing and consensus building between BFM and the Financial Management Division are being conducted at appropriate times. The results of the audit are as follows.

In BFM, all members are involved in budget management, but the two members who lead BFM and the one who leads the Financial Management Division exchange information on a daily basis, including all communication with the Cabinet Office, the university, and the divisions, and all three members constantly share the same information and strive to reach consensus at the appropriate time.

Documents such as the "Subsidy for Facility," "Trial Balance of Operating Expenses," and "Trial Balance of Core Environment Maintenance" are used as tools for information sharing to ensure that there is no omission of sharing.

The auditors hope that appropriate information sharing and consensus building will continue to take place.

#### (5) Reduction of overtime work

The auditors confirmed the reduction of overtime with HR. The results of the audit are as follows.

As staff awareness of overtime has increased, overtime hours have decreased every year.

In FY2020, when continuous overtime was observed in the time and attendance system, the HR asked their managers for a reason and, if necessary, requested adjustments from the Division Head.

In addition, training to raise awareness of working hour management among managers was also included in the management training program.

In the current situation, overtime work is considered to be limited to the minimum necessary for



unexpected reasons because of the above-mentioned decreasing trend and efforts.

In addition, with the start in FY2019 of the mandatory five-day paid leave per year, HR has been encouraging eligible staff and their managers to take paid leave; as a result, 100% of this employee benefit has been taken so far.

The auditors highly commend the efforts of HR, but strongly hope that the reduction of overtime work will continue to progress.

#### (6) Review of personnel allocation

The auditors confirmed the review of personnel allocation with HR. The results of the audit are as follows.

In FY2020, a new scheme was established in which each division head submits a request for staffing for the next fiscal year, and the university's senior management approves the request by prioritizing and adjusting the timing of hiring, considering both organizational strategy and budget management.

Specifically, at the Strategic Resource Allocation Committee (SRAC), the Vice President of Human Resource and the Vice President of Financial Management interview each division head about the current organizational chart, personnel costs, personnel allocation, and training plans before the meeting, and then the division heads have an opportunity to present their requests to the senior management for approval by the committee.

Regarding the review of personnel allocation, several divisions complained (in their responses to the auditors) that the process is not transparent. The auditors highly commend the efforts and sincere responses of the Strategic Resource.

The Allocation Committee, the vice president for Human Resource, the HR staff, the Vice President for Financial Management, and the Finance staff, who coordinate matters that are the foundation of the University, have enabled more precise budget allocation for labor cost this time, such as labor cost, HR budget, and career development plans. Based on the new findings, we strongly hope that this will lead to greater process transparency in the future.

#### (7) Development of backup systems and data backups

The auditors confirmed with the IT division the status of the backup server and other systems that it generally manages. The audit results are as follows.

At the time of the university's inauguration, because of the university's small size, there was a belief that the requirements would be met through individual backups rather than costly systematic backups.

It is also understood that many systems (i.e., HR system, accounting system, approval system, IDM, TIDA/Directory, Library management system, fixed management system, etc.) needed to be established as soon as possible to meet the launch of the university, and these systems continued

to be prioritized.

Since then, there has been an urgent need to expand the systems and networks to keep up with the growth of the university; as a result, there has been a lack of general control in IT, and some backup servers have not been adequately maintained.

Since then, cloud computing has become the mainstream because of the technological innovations in IT. Moreover, the university's IT has found the advantage of using cloud computing for core business systems to strengthen general control in IT, and system migration has been actively promoted.

So far, the IT Division has been able to convert the e-mail infrastructure, file sharing system, my number management system, and invitee management system to the cloud, and it has just realized a backup system and data backup along with it.

The auditors highly commend the efforts of the IT Division and strongly hope that the appropriate backup system and data backup will continue to be developed.

#### (8) Legal matters

Legal and other aspects were verified as follows.

(a) On March 7, 2021 and May 17, 2021, we met with Ernst & Young Shin Nihon LLC.

There were no instances, suspicions, or allegations of fraud affecting the university.

In addition, there were no instances of non-compliance with regulations or failure to be properly aware of laws, circumstances, or other factors that could affect the university.

(b) A meeting was held with the university's General Counsel on March 21, 2021.

He confirmed that four litigation cases are underway, including one case of research misconduct related to the publication of a research article, but that appropriate measures have been taken, including a request for retraction of the article, discipline/suspension of the research member and notification of the Cabinet Office.

It was confirmed that all cases are being actively and appropriately managed by the university's General Counsel and his office.

## 6. Conclusions

As written in the Introduction, the university is entering a major milestone year.

The Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology School Corporation Act (Law No. 76, 2009), the basis for the establishment of the university, stipulates in Article 1 that:

*the purpose of this Act is to provide for necessary matters concerning the establishment and operation of the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology in order to promote internationally distinguished research and education on science and technology based in Okinawa (within Okinawa Prefecture; the same shall apply*

*hereinafter), and thus contribute to the promotion and self-sustaining development of Okinawa and to the development of science and technology worldwide.*

Currently, most of the university's operating expenses are covered by subsidies from the Japanese government (the Cabinet Office).

If this form of management is to be continued, it must be understood by the Cabinet Office, the fiscal authorities, and the Japanese people.

OIST needs to explain to the Japanese people in an easy-to-understand manner that the university has made significant achievements since its establishment, in keeping with the objectives stated in the rationale for its establishment.

The auditors consider "competitive research funds" as one way to make the Japanese people understand the high quality of OIST's research that many people in Japan think of as "competitive research funds," which is something that very high-level researchers have to work on diligently to obtain. However, this is not the only way to make people understand the high quality of research at OIST.

It is necessary to appeal to the Japanese people about the university's high-quality research through various methods and ideas.

The auditors have taken up the points that need improvement and recognized how sincerely each division is working on the OIST project.

The auditors hope that the Japanese people will further understand the high quality of OIST's research and support the university as a "Treasure of Okinawa and Japan."

The university's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially the Office of the Provost and Research Support Division's (RSD) contribution, has been excellent.

The update given by Provost Mary Collins on the research being done at the university (highlighting antibody testing and T-cell testing) and the university's ability to support the community of Okinawa is commendable.

The auditors strongly hope that the university will be supported as "a treasure of Okinawa and Japan.'

Finally, the auditors express their gratitude for each division's sincere responses during the audit and the excellent cooperation of the university's management and other related parties.

The Japanese version of the "Audit Report" is the original. If there is any discrepancy between the English and Japanese versions, the Japanese version shall prevail.

For the translation of the Japanese version of the Audit Report into English, appropriate assistance was obtained from Ms. Mari Takenouchi and Ms. Akiko Ringdahl of CPR, who also enabled the necessary communication to take place during the interviews and other occasions in the auditors' audits. The auditors express their special thanks to them.



# Auditors' Audit Risk Matrix

