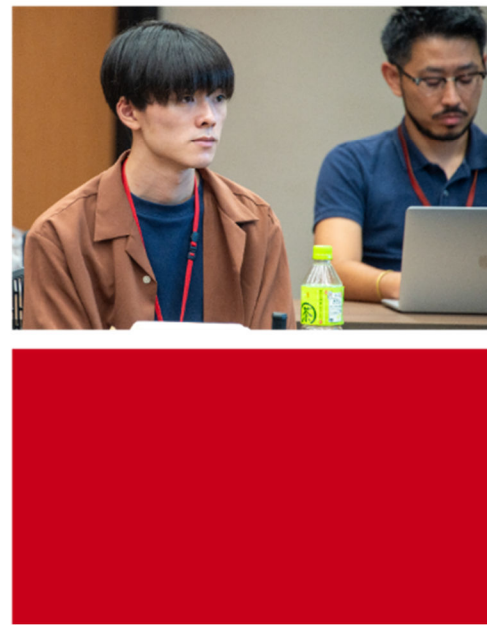




OIST OKINAWA INSTITUTE
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Exploring Science Amid Adversity:

OIST International Science Summer Camp



Following last year’s success, this year witnessed the OIST-KEIO International Research Summer Camp 2023 take place from July 31st to August 10th, 2023. Organized by the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University (OIST), the camp presented an exciting and enlightening opportunity for 20 medical students from Keio University’s School of Medicine. Over the course of the event’s 10 days, the enthusiastic “campers” experienced firsthand how cutting-edge scientific research is conducted at OIST. Even as Okinawa was hit by an unprecedented typhoon during this time, the Keio campers and the crew at OIST gave it their all to make the most out of their challenging circumstances. This camp symbolizes the strong bond maintained between OIST and Keio University, who have been strategic partners since 2020.

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DELVING INTO FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH AMIDST A RAGING STORM

The main goal of the camp was to provide participants with an immersive and hands-on experience in innovative scientific research. By engaging in varied laboratory-based work, the campers gained a deeper understanding of the fundamental sciences. Unfortunately, a significant portion of the schedule was disrupted as a powerful typhoon struck during the camp days. This led to several unexpected obstacles and modifications to the initial plans.

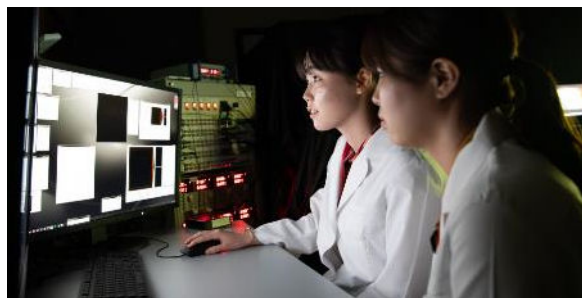
However, despite the adverse weather conditions, the campers, along with dedicated principal investigators (PIs), supervisors, staff, and organizers, demonstrated exceptional resilience and adaptability. Keen on transforming challenges into unique learning experiences, the students managed to explore various scientific fields in a series of indoor workshops, discussions, and seminars led by OIST experts.



A major highlight of the program was the unique opportunity for students to participate in several of OIST's research units, notably those dedicated to research in molecular biology, neuroscience, and environmental science. The campers were allocated to 15 research units, where they gained insights into ongoing scientific works and their practical applications under the guidance of PIs and supervisors. Additionally, through interactive platforms enabling discussions and practical sessions, Keio students could ask questions, exchange ideas, and broaden their scientific perspectives.

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All the people at OIST were very kind and answered even the little questions I had. The research that was being done in the lab was very interesting and I wanted to learn more about it.”



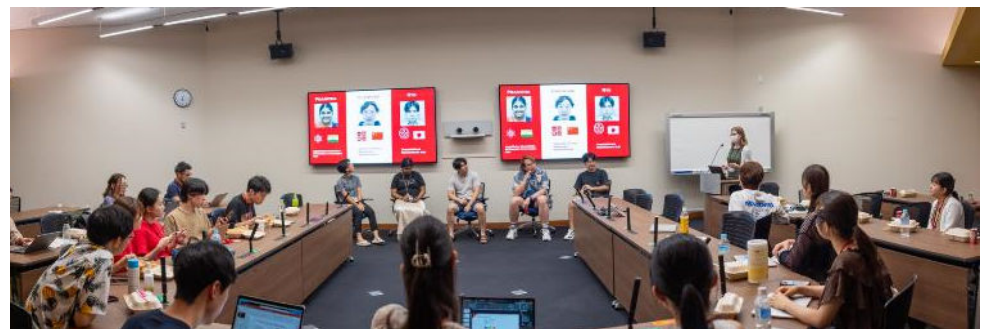
BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF LABORATORY WORK

While the camp’s main objective was to have the students dip their toes in hands-on research activities, it offered a diverse program for a more enriching experience. Gender diversity classes, discussions on research ethics, and conversations about life in Okinawa with OIST’s doctoral students were integrated alongside the scientific curriculum to not only expand the students' academic horizons but also foster a more ethically considerate and culturally aware group of future researchers. This comprehensive approach aimed to instill a sense of responsibility and a broader worldview in these budding scientists and medical professionals, who will need not only academic proficiency but also high ethical and societal awareness in their future endeavors.

Notably, the experience also proved to be fulfilling for OIST’s PIs and doctoral students, who got the opportunity to bond with the campers. *“We were more than happy to hear that one of the campers wished she could stay longer and do more lab work with us,”* says Dr. Fathy Hassan, who forms part of Christine Luscombe’s research unit. *“The experience was certainly important for me as well,”* he adds.

“

It was a good opportunity to think about society as a whole, not just the scientific realm.”



COMMITTED TO SCIENCE AND PROGRESS AGAINST ALL ODDS

Even as the OIST-KEIO International Research Summer Camp 2023 faced unprecedented challenges due to the typhoon, it definitely stood out as a testament to the resilience and dedication of the organizers and participants alike. The event not only provided invaluable insights into the complexities of academic research but also imparted essential skills to aspiring professionals, such as adaptability, problem-solving, and teamwork.

The success of the camp despite unexpected circumstances highlights the collaborating institutions' commitment to learning—a shining example of how the pursuit of knowledge and the spirit of scientific inquiry can always prevail. This experience will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact on the participants' memories and will contribute to both their academic and personal growth.

“

I had many valuable experiences in a wonderful environment. Above all, the people at OIST are all funny and friendly, and I learned a lot from them!”





Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University
1919-1 Tancha, Onna-son, Kunigami-gun
Okinawa, Japan 904-0495