

## Features

### President Yoshiyuki Sakaki outlines plans for his second term

Dr Yoshiyuki Sakaki was reappointed the president of Toyohashi University of Technology in April 2012. "During this shorter, two year term, I want to strengthen and complete the initiatives I started during my previous four year tenure," says Sakaki. "The three main pillars of the university are education, research and our contribution to both the local and global society. I want to maintain a balanced approach in all three of these areas to create an environment to nurture leaders, specialists, and leaders able to play an active role on a global level."

Under president Sakaki's leadership Toyohashi University of Technology (Toyohashi Tech) restructured its undergraduate education courses into five new departments:

Mechanical Engineering  
Electrical and Electronic Information Engineering  
Computer Science and Engineering  
Environmental and Life Sciences  
Architecture and Civil Engineering

"The inclusion of more courses related to the environment and life sciences reflects the needs of industry and society in general of the 21<sup>st</sup> century," says Sakaki. "We want to offer students a much more diverse range of subjects to study."

In addition to restructuring educational courses, president Sakaki has also launched innovative research initiatives exemplified by the Electronics-Inspired Interdisciplinary Research Institute (EIIRIS: <http://www.eiiris.tut.ac.jp/index.html>). "The role of EIIRIS and other research initiatives at the university is to contribute to solving global problems such as food production, aging societies, and disaster mitigation and management," explains Sakaki. "I think that an interdisciplinary approach is crucial to find solutions to these daunting problems."

EIIRIS forms the hub of new international young researcher exchange programs. Examples of recent exchange agreements include the launch of researcher-based exchange programs with Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi; University College London; Davy-Faraday Laboratory, at the Royal Institution of Great Britain; University of California, Irvine; Pierre et Marie Curie University - (PARIS 6); and Chungnam National University (Korea).

"EIIRIS shows our emphasis on an international approach to collaborative research," says Sakaki. "We are also organizing international conferences and symposia to encourage international collaboration and to increase the visibility of the activities of the university".

Other recent initiatives include the Center for Human-Robot Symbiosis Research and the Research Center for collaborative Area Risk Management.

The Irago Conference (<http://www.apirc.jp/>; also known as the Asia Pacific Interdisciplinary Research Conference (AP-IRC)) is an example of one of the outreach initiatives launched by Sakaki. The AP-IRC 2011 held Nov 17-18, 2011 (<http://www.apirc.jp/apirc2011/index.html>) attracted over 400 participants and yielded 50 refereed papers that were published in the IOP JPCS (<http://iopscience.iop.org/1742-6596/352/1>).

Other program being implemented at Toyohashi Tech include: Tailor Made Baton Zone: <http://www.batonzone.tut.ac.jp/> for graduate student; Sakaki Prestige Lectures: <http://www.tut.ac.jp/prestige-lectures.html>, by internationally renowned scholars and industrialists for the general public; and EIIRIS Special Seminars for the general public <http://www.eiiris.tut.ac.jp/index.html>.

"Managing the university is one of my main roles," says Sakaki. "But in addition to this, I would like to think that my most important mission as president is to inspire faculty, administration, and of course students to tackle the many challenges facing mankind of the 21<sup>st</sup> century".

